GARET ROGERS

Prisoner in Paradise

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For STAN

There's no keep so secure as one's own limitations

SPARTAN McCLINTOCK in his cups

Contents

Prologue

ON THE map the state of Kennassee looks like a frown corrugated as it is with its parallel mountain ranges and because of this the train that leaves Tenneville at 7 22 in the morning to cleave its way east ward across the state does not complete the short journey in less than nine hours In winter when the snows fill the gorges and clog the passes the trip may take as long as ten or eleven hours Yet Kennassee is a Southern state or fancies itself so the citizenry mainly of English Irish and black Scots origins still attitudinizing over the lamented Stars and Bars when the proper occasion arises Northern climate or no the Kennassean mind dwells on the sunny side of the Mason and Dixon line

Only the 7 22—the Tenneville Express—partakes of no regional flavor it being a rolling world unto itself

Not quite thirty miles out of Tenneville the queen city the foot hills begin and as the express seemingly searches its way along look ing for openings and ways to creep through the mountains ahead the passengers settle down for a slow if scenic trip She is a busi nesslike train the 7 22 and she carries salesmen and students and travelers who want to get across the state not folk who have come down from the hills for a glimpse of the big city There are mainly coaches usually but one Pullman and often in the days of gas ra tioning as many as three smokers to accommodate the men with the brief cases the college students and the servicemen These rocking taverns are fragrant with smoke while the gurglings of innumerable bottles of beer and whisky add to the merriment There is a brisk business at the water cooler for chasers as is the MEN most popular with the beer drinkers The ladies must needs report back to the coaches however and should the express ever recognize their pres ence in a smoker a similar accommodation would surely be labeled not LADIES but bluntly pointedly WOMEN The express herself is by way of being a Southern lady

A

Prologue

On a certain spring morning in the year 1941 the 7 22 was several hours out of Tenneville Winding her way through a gap of such wild beauty that the soft season had done little to gentle it the express came to an unscheduled stop Outside the grimy windows the passengers stared at a dung-colored station and then their gazes moved with a vicarious and therefore felicific horror to a series of ridges to the north Back in there it is, the beer drinkers said to each other only you can t see it from here

A single passenger climbed aboard a gaunt man in an ugly suit his hair ill-cut his mouth a slit and his eyes gray and penetrating as November sleet His hands were empty except for the ticket which he presented to the conductor

For a man in his late thirties he seemed strangely ill at ease in the world, almost startled by it. As he advanced through the smoker his cold eyes fell warily upon the young men already in uniform darted to the women then became forbiddingly opaque As if coming upon a chance refuge he scrambled into a seat scattered with a discarded Tenneville *Times* and buried himself in the newspaper

He remained thus embayed from the smoke and the chatter and the laughter for the duration of his trip In late afternoon the 7 22 rolled down out of the mountains to stop before a raw brick station entitled DUBLIN and here the sullen black haired man departed

He walked along the platform apparently without purpose Then he hesitated and stopped when a bleating man with thinning hair and a silly grin blocked his way crying Hey Spart! Spartan McClintock! Don t you recognize me? The train chuffed so that the last few words were almost inaudible

Trying to shove past the black haired man said wearily Oh go to hell Boswell"

By this time the express was pulling out Slowly the tableau of the two men oddly staring at one another vanished from sight

BOOK I

Contact and Incubation

EVEN in the declining days of the Age of the Horse Dublin was still a dusty town Where hooves spanked up clouds in their passing wire wheels were for some years yet to spin frantically for purchase while the motor that turned them convulsed itself to death On Main Street itself there was paving laid down only where Boswell feet were apt to tread paid for as it was by Boswell money In front of the Boswell Dry Goods Store there was an island of cement walk, and another farther on in front of the Farmers Bank But the rest of the town clear out to Mulberry Street, was alternately powdered with grit or afloat in mud

At Mulberry the dust settled at the entrance to the cool tree arch of shade and hooves rang on brick This one short block was hallowed ground for here dwelt the local undertaker the Baptist minister a hardware merchant a retired patent medicine manufacturer the bank president and the Boswell family Amidst one continuous lawn were the palaces of Dublin and none was grander than that of the Boswells Frame with three cupolas five bay windows a south portico with sunroom above a veranda, and strangely enough a widow s walk, although it was almost a thousand miles from the sea —the sumptuous house accommodated only Harlan Boswell his wife Agnes and their two children William Jennins and Imagene

The Boswells were Dublin s royalty And although their purple was actually the green of money and not a great amount of that they wore it fairly graciously and had been known to be democratic The modest Boswell fortune derived from storekeeping and bank ing was second generation money and the social duties that ac companied the burden of spending it weighed heavily on both Harlan s and Agnes s consciences

The true tycoon of Dublin had been a cranky individual who had

retired to the farm on which he spent his boyhood and who was known to all as Ole Man Boswell Having exhibited an almost Yankee shrewdness and vigor in his prime Ole Man Boswell had now retrogressed to a state of Southern lethargy possibly induced by a belated infection of hookworms It was this retirement which had placed the trifling empire in son Harlan s hands

Years later, in the mid and late twenties Harlan was to demonstrate his notable financial acuity by actually making a profit in the stock market, but at the present he seemed mentally incapable of any business transaction more exacting than selling a length of ribbon in the Dry Goods Store In consequence he shut himself up in the office located on the second floor just opposite that portion de voted to the sale of corsets and smoked cigars and thought about automobiles all day His plump young wife, not having a business head either could not control a bank or run a store but she compensated nicely by running Dublin instead

Agnes s position, by the time William Jennins was born in 1903, had already become that of an administrative arbiter in social affairs Her edicts on clothes and social graces gleaned mainly from *Mun sey's* and the *Ladies' Home Journal* may have been at times preposterous and at others obvious but they were always law In the matter of naming her son after the great orator and politician no one had bothered to point out to her that the phonetic spelling of her drawling pronunciation of the name was incorrect In the realm of morals she was accredited with the same infallibility usually associated only with popes

Yet Agnes was not a social tyrant. When Maude Taliaferro (pronounced Mawd Tolliver in Dublin) half wit daughter of the local seamstress showed herself either tumorous or pregnant in the spring of 1904 Agnes expressed pity rather than contempt for the situation. Naturally Agnes would not have been called upon to state any opinion of Maude s condition had Maude been married

In fact, Maude was thereafter married and before her delivery to a man named Sam McClintock or something like that. Dublin was never quite sure about the first name because no one knew this McClintock person socially and no one was going to The alleged marriage took place in Tenneville and Agnes gave the full force and benefit of her credence to the certificate that Maude s mother ex hibited. After all, Maude was a Taliaferro and as Agnes said, "The

Tollivers ah still a rat fan famleh Moreover in Agnes s opinion only colored people had illegitimate children

The Boswells proved their democracy in ways other than mere tolerance of the sexual digressions of a dull witted girl Both William Jennins and his innocent little sister Imagene attended Dublin s grammar school with the ordinary children True Imagene wore white kid Roman high tops in mid winter and she and her brother were carried to and from school either in a buggy or a pony cart driven by a Negro but no one paid any attention to that

Of all the Boswells not one ever made a more telling show of democracy than young William or Buddy as Dublin affectionately called him As early as the age of nine Buddy rubbed his nose in the Dublin dust at the plebeian request of one Spartan McClintock aged eight The event took place one Indian summer afternoon in the schoolyard and was well attended

Yet young Spartan McClintock was not satisfied with Buddy s demonstration It lacked enthusiasm In Buddy s one visible blue eye he detected a mutinous tear Spartan tightened his thighs against Buddy s ribs as though riding a fractious horse and raised a threat ening fist Immediately the blue eye disappeared as Buddy re ground his face in the dust

Who s a bassard? Spartan demanded his tone indicating that Buddy was a slow pupil and could learn only by repetition

I yam came the correct answer

And who ain t?

Buddy pondered You wall' he remembered with a howl Then he lay round rumped as a puppy and wept

Spartan arose shaking the dust from his own coarse black hair Guess that taught you a lesson he observed righteously and looked about him for confirmation He was immediately to learn a greater one himself or at least the opportunity to learn was presented

The spectators were turning their backs on him The first graders in awe the second third and fourth in vague apprehension and the oldsters in wary withdrawal There were no cheers They had literally learned over if not at, their mothers knees that one does not slug money into the dust bloody its nose and kick its behind

Only little Imagene Boswell remained gazing down at her brother without compassion Cry baby she commented and thoughtfully picked her nose Then with the same unbiased judgment she again

relegated Spartan to his proper niche in Dublin society Bassard she said and strolled away

When Spartan arrived at his shabby home still gorged on victory he was seized at once by his grandmother and cuffed Look at those pants! Fighting again! Well I guess it s the Tolliver blood in you Don t ever forget that boy you ve got good blood in you too not just McClintock You don t have to take anything from the poor white trash in this town Don t ever let me hear of you truckling to anybody or I ll fan your britches good Now take off those torn pants and give them to your mother Maybe she can stitch them up without going to sleep about it And go wash your filthy face And mark me! No truckling to anybody! Cuffing him again she directed him towards the pitcher of water in the kitchen by the simple expedient of tossing him in that direction by the ear

Dabbing idly at his face with the lukewarm water he gazed out at their brown privy while from the front of the house his grandmother s voice went on and on A woman always to stand on the order of her leaving she was now about to depart for Mulberry Street A series of commands were pouring from her to his mother Maude was to sew this and hem that and mend his pants and not dawdle Lord knows it s enough I have to do-mark my word that boy s all McClintock——

The slam of the front door bit off the retreating tail of the tirade

He made his way into the sewing room which was his bedroom at night With grandmother gone the place was so quiet that Maude s smile was almost audible In her slow moving hands she had a small dress of pink taffeta ruffled from waist to hem And on each of those ruffles she was to turn with exact stitches an exquisitely rolled hem Watching her plodding movements he wondered again why it was that his mother was sick in the head—considering that grandmother and himself were so smart

He did not make conversation with his mother he knew it would be a waste of time Her speech her walk all her movements seemed timed to the same clock that ticked off the endless hours it took for the moon to sink from the top of the tree to below the mountain or for a skin of ice to form over a puddle Since she spoke so rarely and with such tremendous effort it was an accepted fact that she had only that meager store of words and nothing else rattling about in her head

In silence he handed her his torn pants and then noting that her

pupils were enlarging with the strain waited patiently for her to speak Did you win?

Momentarily he was indignant. Well sure I did!

She smiled and they were silent again In his drawers he lolled among the heaps of material on his cot and daydreamed.

He roused when the porch shook with the thunder of his grand mother s return and jerked nervously as she burst into the room Over her arm was the basket lined in muslin in which she carried the dresses back and forth to Mulberry Street and from it protruded a tongue of purple material that should not still have been there

"You little woods colt! she screamed hurling the basket at him Fight with Buddy Boswell will you? Cock-of the walk aren t you now that you ve taken the bread from our mouths! And I suppose you think you can support me and that diddle witted ma of yours now that Agnes Boswell won t have my sewing in the house or any body else on Mulberry Street by the time she gets through But you you have to go fight with Buddy Boswell don t you? Don t you?

He knocked a chair over as he scuttled away from her putting the table between them and hopping back and forth to escape the swipes of her long arms Snatching for him she swept a mixing bowl full of thread to the floor All colors the spools bounced and rolled, one coming to rest just under the open window And there watching the scene hung two faces that were in many respects other than mere similarity of expression quite alike On each forehead hung a lock of blond hair in each pair of eyes widely separated by a broad nose was the same sluggish wonder And from each nose coursed gelatinous streams that were occasionally mopped up by an efficient and industrious tongue

Immediately grandmother became Mrs Taliaferro Why Buddy! Did your mama send you over to get me?

No m Buddy said He leaned his chin on the window while his pony began an idle stripping of the nearest bush I wanna talk to Spartan ma am Mrs Tolliver

On the porch Spartan learned somewhat dazedly that he had not only beaten Buddy into submission He had also beaten him into devotion

On only one point was Buddy still doubtful You don t think I tattletaled on you do you? Huh? Spart?"

Spartan shuffled with uncertainty Well I——"

"Imagene did! Lissen Spart, I wooden do a thing like that. Lissen Spart my sister is the biggest shit in the whole state of Kennassee!

Yeah Spartan admitted tentatively

Suddenly he found his hand gripped in a pudgy grasp and Buddy s face thrust into his babbling joyously "Idn t she just! Lissen Spart les you and me be pals huh?

Spartan was nothing loath

Before the week was out Spartan had become familiar with the frame mansion on Mulberry Street Belated as he was in learning the lesson he had learned it well You don t rub the nose of money in the dust you make friends with it

Only one unimportant detail had escaped him and it might have gone on unnoticed for some time had not little Imagene herself brought it up At supper one night he demanded of his grandmother Grammer what *is* a bassard"?

Don t *talk* with your mouth *Spartan McClintock!* You go immediately and wash your mouth out with soap!

So he still didn t know and it disconcerted him further when his mother unexpectedly lowered one lid and grinned at him

II

In years to come remembering a word here a full phrase there would come back to him It seemed to him that it must have happened like this

Though she was *fair* there was *no trace in her pastel coloring or* slight frame of the typical blonde she had not the thick gold hair the skin white and poreless as a scoop of lard nor the utilitarian pelvis of the Germanic type And as she was not red faced and sandy haired either Dublin called her that washed-out lookin Mawd Tolliver"

They so described her even in her hearing for it was a known fact that she was diddle witted and couldn t understand anyway The consensus declared Maude congenitally stupid but Agnes Boswell s mother insisted she could remember when Maude was a bright little thing and real feisty too

Maude too could remember both that brief time in her life be fore the endless summer when she lay burning and comatose with *la grippe* and the days that came after when her mind and her body gradually went to war against each other Her body won from there on refusing to obey her except sluggishly disgruntled with the least demand she made of it Only her thoughts moved with the old ra pidity and now and then she was able to force one of them onto the slovenly blob of flesh that filled her mouth.

She was twelve when her father died and she was taken out of school. From that time on laboriously endlessly she turned out the finest sewing done in the county And from that time on too the voice of her mother LaVerne Taliaferro beginning with a trickle of words became a river an ocean with constant tides that drowned Maude and washed her silent and miserable out to sea

When she was seventeen, Will Gates a preacher to-be who wore most of his teeth outside his mouth began to hover around her with his eyes at church He came to call and during that evening embattled by LaVerne s harangue he made his choice the one was not worth the enduring of the other

No other young man ever came to call

It was during the ceremony which wedded Agnes Muller to Harlan Boswell that Maude began to brood, so that all through the tedium of the hot summer months as she worked hourly on a christen ing dress for the Boswell heir her mind dwelt on revenge In spite of LaVerne she would have a man any man at all, and in the manner he chose but preferably someone

Someone like the drummer who was standing at the counter in the Boswell Store that day in late July when she came in to buy more thread for the christening dress He was a big man everything about him lusty—lusty virile black hair and shining mustache lusty great red face from which his voice boomed to the clerk, "Tell Mr Boswell Sam McClintock s here to see him. Sam McClintock of the Spartan Brand Union Suit Company!

She looked first at the rhinestone exclamation point in his cravat and then boldly raised her eyes to his

Panting with the heat and the excitement of her wordless invita tion he followed her straight to the abandoned warehouse on the edge of town. Just inside the entrance to the warehouse she paused,

so that he loomed up against the western sun huge and dark as destiny when he joined her Putting down his sample case he rubbed his great sweating hands on his trousers before he touched her

Her strangeness gave him pause "This ain t right" he said with a rich tobacco breath Whyn t your old man lock a dummy like you up for God s sake! A man s gotta live with himself don t he? But you can t expect him to turn it down when it s thrown at him even if the girl don t know what she " His voice died as the hand searching her shoulder strayed downwards to ascertain the swelling of her breasts

Very slowly sighing he sank to the floor with her 'The things" he said sadly a man sees on the road these days "

She met his bleak eyes saw in them a fleeting pity and looked away Then as he pressed down on her the unceasing jabbering of her mother s voice that had driven Will Gates away and followed her everywhere suddenly was stilled She gasped and fastened her stare on his sample case On it was printed in large letters SPARTAN

Girlie Sam McClintock said panting yet "what s your name?"

He came to Dublin two more times that month and then disappeared It took LaVerne until April to catch up with him in the office of the general manager of the Spartan Brand Union Suit Company And by then Maude was almost to term Grossly swollen exhausted from the train trip Maude was not a pretty bride It was not important she did not expect to see her husband Sam McClintock again

Nor did she

Her labor was difficult but when a garrulous LaVerne placed her son at her side she managed to smile Her tongue lumbered over the word Spar tan she said Spar tan "

Once Sam McClintock sent her ten dollars and a small picture of himself The rhinestone pin in his cravat showed up nicely but his eyes appeared rather cruel Then two years later there was an insurance check in the mail for three hundred dollars Sam had died in a train wreck leaving his son as his beneficiary LaVerne was out of the house when the letter arrived and later that day Maude sneaked the money down to the bank and deposited it in her boy s name She mentioned to LaVerne only that the husband of her bosom was dead

Dead eh? LaVerne said Well good riddance to bad " She said a great deal more along that line

Maude rarely heard her mother any more her thoughts were all on her ill gotten brat She had such wonderful plans for his future Each day she thought of a new and finer one

III

Spartan did not descend into envy gradually rather he hurtled into it To see any possession of Buddy s was to covet it desperately, and his treasures amassed—the pony the bicycle the baseball bat the lead soldier set the Tom Swift books the Red Flyer wagon the Red Blazer sled and the bay windowed room—aroused Spartan to a frenzy of greed And daily his greed drew him again to the Bos well house and daily he suffered deprivation anew

In the face of all this his grandmother one day brightly placed a dime in a teapot When you re grown boy this will be full of dimes! Just think of that!

Two years later when he was ten years old the pot contained the sum of one dollar and ninety cents He hated that teapot hated its ugly brown glaze its broken spout he had contempt for all that it represented in the way of mean petty degrading thrift

And because his hate and humiliation needed a human object also he fastened on the reprehensible Imagene thus further endearing himself to Buddy

IV

Every summer they spent their days out at the Boswell farm In side the house Ole Man Boswell shivered in the heat and warmed himself before an empty fireplace Having wrung him dry of his money the younger Boswells had cast him off Realizing this Spar tan made his second discovery about the world of money Being a friend to it even being related to it was not enough You had to have it and then by God keep it!

The how of the matter he could not decide until Buddy uncon sciously did it for him

As they progressed ahead of Imagene into puberty they had

taken to hiding from her bent on certain experimental ventures Their one refuge was a shaded rock jutting over a creek that constituted one of the boundaries of the farm

Here they repaired instantly one hot morning having made good their escape from Imagene Before them they herded a fat greasy sheep Spartan having suddenly remembered a pithy piece of advice given them in the Boswell stable Allers face a sheep upta wadder boys they won t run then

Nor did this ewe run Instead the indignant creature dimly realizing what Spartan and Buddy proposed to do with her butted Buddy into the water and Spartan into the rock bloodying his knees They did not speak of sex for at least twenty four hours thereafter They had to fall back on their futures as the only interesting topic left

Spartan was murmuring about going to West Point although he knew full well that his grandmother was relying on him to wrangle a job at the Boswell bank as soon as he finished his second year of high school

Hell Spart any old body can go to West Point. I'm going to be a big doctor like my Grandfather Muller Besides my folks want me to anyway

"Huh I m going to be a—— Spartan stopped to consider "Do big doctors make lots of money?"

Why I hope to kiss a pig they do!

Maybe Spartan said I ll be one too

After that he wondered sometimes Does everybody make up their minds just like that?

At any rate he had

v

Entering high school that year Spartan set himself to work determined to climb from the middle of the class to the top It was not a mere matter of applying himself as he had thought He learned with high indignation that teachers invariably have the habit of grading one on past performance alone The mediocre student in grammar school must necessarily be mediocre in high school and the genius of the sand table is surely tomorrow s valedictorian

Then when he learned that Western College a small fast of knowl

edge among the mountains several hundred miles away offered a partial scholarship to the graduate with the highest marks he entered into a prolonged frenzy When he got *B s* instead of the rightfully earned *A s* it was a matter of the pony cart baseball bat wagon and sled all over again Buddy s education was assured Spartan had to earn his He hit the books harder telling himself that someday somehow by God for once in his life he was going to get what he deserved

Through the summers he now worked in the Boswell hardware store Buddy and Imagene went junketing off to Cincinnati or Nashville or Tenneville for prolonged vacations staying with relatives

But when Buddy returned in the fall the friendship was resumed When nights were still balmly they could wander the streets with girls later to take them to that secluded spot behind the Boswell stable and there as Buddy expressed it And then boy an howdy huh Spart?

Summer coming again the younger Boswells were off Buddy declaring Dublin to be fresh out of untried Boy an Howdy Spartan was left behind to earn money to worry through the hot nights to scheme again and again how he could obtain the three thousand dollars he had learned he would need for a medical education

Then one May night Spartan and Buddy sat side by side on the platform in the high school auditorium faces red and eyes bulging from their tight collars And on each forehead gleamed the profuse sweat of fear Salutatorian and valedictorian they were Buddy the former though he was at the foot of the class and Spartan the latter because he was at the head This was a very satisfactory arrangement for all with the possible exception of the girl whose grades were next highest to Spartan s

Half swooning Buddy floundered through his speech He was *setting out immediately he informed all on the Great Road which* began apparently with some kind of threshold

Fer Gawd s sakes Spartan thought with aching sympathy Buddy will you kinely shut up and sit down

It was his own turn suddenly and he found himself looking directly into the maw of the audience that had so terrified Buddy The snappy speech he had prepared deserted him It came to him that having said nothing at all as yet, even Buddy s performance could

be said so far to outshine his From habit humiliation became anger and he rallied

When he finally came to a panting conclusion he made the dis covery that he was a compelling orator and for two cents he would do it all over again

His winning of a partial scholarship at Western College was an nounced While unannounced though of much greater impor tance to Dublin was the fact that Buddy Boswell had won a Stutz Bearcat from his parents as a graduation present.

VI

Then Buddy and Imagene again went to Cincinnati for the sum mer and Spartan was left to work in the hardware store sorting nails sweating in the heat and considering himself

The envy of the privileges of money had been for many years like a coating inside of him but as the weeks went by great chunks of it broke loose and floated through his mind as he realized what he was doing to himself His three years of pre med at Western were assured The scholarship paid his tuition and allowed him a set sum for books and lab fees His room and board would be partly covered by his savings and partly by the on-campus job awaiting him at Western

After that he faced med school and medical schools were haughty institutions commanding high grades and high tuitions both on the barrelhead

As the summer came to a close and he was preparing to enter college he tried to forget his doubts of the future If I start worrying now about what s going to happen three years from now I won t even go to Western at all Maybe when I m ready for med I can talk Buddy s dad into making me a loan from the bank—or Buddy can Or maybe Rockefeller will die and leave me a million dollars Oh dammit I *deserve* the money that s the point I ve got what it takes to be a good doctor I ve

Buddy was grinning across the counter at him

Well hey! When did you get home?"

Morning train Boy oh boy it s good to see you Spart Say I can t wait you and me starting off for little ole Western in a

week   Oh lookit—— He laid a hunting rifle on the counter Snappy, huh? Got it in Cinci cost me fifty bucks

Spartan eyed the gun morosely Fifty dollars He had to work two hundred hours for fifty dollars

looking down in the mouth ole pal Buddy was rattling along Bet you need your ashes hauled betcha Tonight let s you and me go out in my little ole Bearcat with a coupla girls and boy an howdy   Say what s the matter with you? Aren t we pals any more or not?

Sure he and Buddy were pals no denying that And no use blaming Buddy that he had the money any more than blaming himself that he had the brains Sometimes of course the little things bothered him The fifty-dollar gun in conjunction with the dusty teapot on the kitchen shelf   But why let it irk you? he asked himself Did you want a lousy gun? All right then

Nevertheless a voice inside said But I do want to I *got* to go to medical school

VII

The night before he left for college his two women were in and out of the sewing room where his cot was half the night Grand mother came in twice to blubber over his departure and once more to deliver a long paean completely unpunctuated on the duties and glories of being a man Grandma s boy a Taliaferro through and through all McClintock—look at that hair why wasn t he staying home and taking a job Buddy s father would be happy to put him on as a teller in the bank but no he had to run off half-cocked to col lege what s so wonderful about cutting up dead people that s what doctor students do why wasn t he buckling down to his responsi bilities lazy oaf?

He awoke again to the light of a kerosene lamp The door closed, and his mother dragged herself to his bed her pale braids the only easily moving thing about her Silently she laid a bankbook on his sheeted lap In 1906 the sum of three hundred dollars had been de posited in the Farmers Bank in his name Since then the interest had almost doubled the amount

A secret " Maude said fiercely "Don t tell her!

It wasn t the three thousand dollars by any means but it was a sight better than no dollars at all A grown man of seventeen he found himself bawling—all this long lonesome summer of worrying—and reached out blindly to snuffle into a pale pigtail before bawling again

In the longest speech she had made in years Maude whispered in hesitant intensity to him The money was his and any other she could get her hands on She had never been demonstrative towards him a boy didn t need that and his grandmother hag rode him enough. But she loved him just the same and she was desperately proud of him She knew he could be a doctor a great one And it was his job to study and hers to sew in silent determination and sew and sew and sew You'll make it Doc tor Spart tan McClin —she gasped deeply— " tock!"

They grinned at each other identically conspirators wearing the same mask He burst out Fer Gawd s sake why didn t you tell me you were—intelligent! And then stared at her aghast

To his consternation tears burst from her eyes even as she—there was no doubt about it—snickered Foot in your mouth!

The closing of the door shut away the lamp and he lay in the dark pondering All these years and she never let on she just watched him quietly waiting for him to discover it for himself

But if there was nothing wrong with her mind then what did she have wrong with her anyway? Fired with a high resolve he went to sleep promising himself that someday he would become a wealthy important, brilliant doctor and find out

2

IN THE fall of 1921 the new part time janitor of the science building of Western College Kennassee was on his way to his new place of employment. He sat in the smoker next to the window hands tight about two newspaper wrapped sandwiches feet resting on a straw valise The new part time janitor was seventeen years old a creature still in the bean pole stage of his growth so that he threatened at any moment to sprout through the summit of his skull He wore his mouth this day in a straight line as though it were only with conscious control that he could prevent it from dropping agape

He had never been on a train before and had thought until now that the keen of the whistle must tear out the hearts of the passengers so affecting was it when heard across the arctic hush of winter nights But inside the smoker the din was that of a tavern, male voices boomed interrupted by short intervals of gulping from flasks and jugs The afternoon sun rested on top of instead of penetrating, the low lying fog of cigar smoke and motes danced from the plush seats whenever anyone moved, as if they were filled with dust for a stuffing

Next to the part time janitor sat a plump young dandy fair as a buttercup with a skin that moved like a cream sea among the scattered pustules that were its tiny volcanic islands This dandy was bored with the scenery both inside and out, and the mountains through which the train was cautiously poking its way were to him annoying curtains of rock alternately cutting off or allowing the sun to fall full on him so that he blinked constantly His feet too rested on his luggage a collection of Gladstones deposited on the floor Rattling in the rack above his head were his two tennis rackets his golf clubs his gun and even a fishing rod in a long canvas envelope You knew to look at him that he was off to college a place

where he would spend his time indulging in sports or watching others indulge in them and occasionally wondering what all those people did in those rooms with lecture chairs in them and great big *S*'s followed by little bitty letters and numbers drawn on the blackboards

First thing Spart the dandy said to the janitor I m going to do is stake me out some women

First thing I m going to do Well we ll probably check in the dorm of course and I ll have to see about when I start my job But I thought maybe we could have a look at the labs '

II

They did neither for because of Buddy s collection of expensive paraphernalia they found themselves holding a kind of open house in the dorm room to which they had been assigned Upperclassmen wandered in to heft Buddy s clubs and swish his rackets through the air There was strangely flattering talk of the frats operating illegally on the campus talk which shot past Spartan and straight to Buddy as if it were iron filings and Buddy the magnet Buddy beamed picked his pimples and mentioned his Bearcat sixteen times in two hours

Spartan mentioned something about labs or something like that but no one heard him He stood looking out the window at the hilly campus awed by buildings the like of which he had never seen before and on the defensive against such talk of Greek letters foot ball cuties firewater Sweet Caporals roadsters and ukes—the like of which he had never heard before As always he was standing on the sidelines of Buddy s life

One by one the young gentlemen departed each with a hearty handshake and a sly wink to Buddy each with the final word Deke or Delta or Kappa on his lips At last there remained a beefy young man with black hair sleeked away from a part in the middle sharp black eyes and a superior grin He rose lazily from his chair and clasped Buddy s paw

Remember ole boy he said heartily pumping Buddy s arm "Crap' One of these good ole days we firmly expect to see the good ole letter *Crap* pinned on your good ole sweater

Buddy looked as though he were being insulted

My name" continued the representative of Crap is good ole

Milton Salpinger What s the good ole name of your good ole room mate standing over there by the good ole——

Spartan McClintock " Spartan said highly appreciative of all this And that s good ole Buddy Boswell there

How ya Buddy said coldly

What are you majoring in, boy deep-sea fishing? Milton inquired genially

We re pre meds " Spartan murmured with a becoming modesty as he noted that Buddy was getting rather red in the face

Going to be doctors! Buddy said importantly

Milton was tremendously impressed Honest? Good ole——" A slouching young man passing the door caught his eye "Hey Ez, c mere a minute! Guys want you to meet good ole Ez Conklin Ez these guys are going to be surgeons! What do you think of that?

Buddy was astounded How did you know?

Spartan suddenly disliked this Milton Salpinger intensely "Any thing wrong with that?

The slouching young man grew apologetic So you re pre meds too! he said hastily Well we sure picked the toughest course of the bunch I ll bet You wall from the same town?

Ignoring him Spartan said directly to this presumptuous Milton Salpinger All right so what are you going to specialize in?

Do I hafta specialize? The black eyes showed white all around as they rolled ceilingwards A meditation transpired "O K then I m going to be an abortionist I realize of course that it will take years of the strictest application and service to humanity but I m willing to make the sacrifice Isn t that fine and upstanding of me?"

freshmen too Ez Conklin was hurrying on Our room s just down the hall aways After supper whyn t we all get together and——"

But Spartan inclined to carp when riled interrupted Listen Salpinger if you think medicine s such a joke why don t you go in for phys ed or something? Believe you me pre med s no snap from what I hear and med school s even——

No kidding? Milt asked innocently Who told you?

Spartan drew himself up If you find my conversation so——"

Aw Mi t lay off Ez Conklin begged suddenly

Exactly as though this were his room and the bed upon which he placed his heavily fleshed thighs his bed Milton Salpinger sprawled

out in complete composure and shook his head at Ez Conklin "No, son I ve got to do it A sacred promise is a sacred promise"

"Will ya get off my clean shirts! Buddy bellowed

Oh sorry Milt lifted one buttock peeked under like a hen searching for an egg and removed a stack of shirts Like I said a vow is a vow Ez I am going to pronounce the Word He pointed a finger at Spartan 'You happen to know how many freshmen pre-meds there are on campus?"

I don t give a damn" Spartan said promptly "If you like that bed better than yours why don t you take it with you?"

Milt was delighted Oh now, say that s awfully white of you Hey Ez, he just give me his good ole roommate s——"

Now Spart Buddy said unhappily I don t see you have any call to say a thing——

Oh shut up Milt said in so genial a tone that it almost escaped being insulting I'll tell you how many pre meds there are McClintock Thirteen freshmen Three are the sons of doctors so we can eliminate them For my purposes I mean One s a girl——"

"How disgusting Buddy decided

Milt bowed to Buddy We'll eliminate her too That leaves nine and I ve met them all in the past twenty four hours And do you know what all nine want to be you wall included?

Abortionists Spartan said

I do not—— Buddy began indignantly

Spartan was somewhat mollified to see Milt grin 'I walked into that one McClintock No here s my point My old man s a Gee Pee That means garden variety doctor to you guys He s a surgeon midwife psychiatrist and once-in a while dentist in this hick town where we live Last year he made one thousand spondulics cash and my mother thought we was millionaires He works twice as hard as any body else in town he worked twenty times as hard as anybody else to get his education and the town still treats him like a poor relative Every time he asks somebody to pay a bill they act like he was asking for a handout That s medicine for you that s the great service to humanity all wrapped up for you in one thin sheet of john paper So when I see you wall goofs running around with your mouths hanging open yelling about wanting to be gu reat surgeons I want to urp I know exactly what you ll be doing twenty years from now you ll be up to your ears in bills and your wife will look like

she got her Easter outfit out of the trash can and your kids will be wearing the plumber's cast-off clothes Surgeons' Yeah

My grandfather Muller was a doctor " Buddy said haughtily "and my mother never had on any plumber s clothes in her life

Milt picked up Buddy s hunting gun from the desk and rubbed his hand over the wood How much this thing cost?" he asked bluntly

If you must know fifty bucks "

'Yeah " Milt said "Well Boswell you just might be a gu reat surgeon at that I guess it s the law of averages that once in a while somebody makes dough out of being a doctor " He rose and went to lean against the doorframe You wall want to horse around with the rest of us tonight? There s a Wop kid down the hall his old man s a bootlegger He s got some gin "

Buddy frowned importantly 'Well I sorta promised that Deke guy I d drop over and see their club room tonight

You would " Milt said "How about you good ole McClintock?"

As though he had been vainly importuned all afternoon to inspect club rooms Spartan shrugged No club room for me I m working my way through on a partial scholarship I haven t got the dough to join the Salvation Army "

So who ain t? Milt said negligently

You mean ain t got money"?" Spartan said, growing touchy again

There was a neat lace edging of mockery on the gantlet Milton Salpinger tossed down for Spartan. Why no McClintock. I meant, who ain t here on a scholarship?"

III

Buddy ripened under the late sun of pledge week and was har vested a Deke And as Milton Salpinger had predicted it so came to pass that the good ole Deke was an organization composed solely of the finest examples of good ole individuals Almost nightly Buddy came rolling in at eleven gin-scented and expansive to interrupt Spartan at his books and to extol the virtues of the Dekes and be moan the dismal life Spartan must be leading since he was not one of them

Spartan snapped at his closest friend ungraciously returned to his studies and found Buddy s hurt face looking up at him from the pages Then as he again looked up to apologize he remembered the

afternoons with the shadows long on the football field the tiny Dekes practicing for the games the tiny Buddy lolling in the stands and himself standing at the sci building window resting momentarily on a broom The arm that ached yet from the unaccustomed exercise of washing some twenty blackboards resumed its writing and the apology was retracted unspoken

He envied Buddy his pledgeship in Deke and he could not have said why There was no satisfactory explanation for the paradox that turned various rowdy dullards into the most fascinating of creatures simply because they had chosen to band themselves together to the exclusion of certain others Yet it was true the Dekes had turned the coup nicely and Spartan found himself cast adrift on his pride washed out to sea on the Dekes wave of popularity He would not he stated positively to Buddy be one of them for a million dollars All goofs every one And in return Buddy assured him that they were good ole folk indeed and agreeing secretly Spartan loathed them all the more

By the end of his first week at Western he had found himself seeking out such social untouchables as Milt Salpinger and Ez Conklin out of sheer loneliness Slowly as the illegal frats swelled themselves with pledges the Salpinger inspired bastard organization known as Crap came along behind gathering up the unwanted refuse There was a pre legal freshman who opened his mouth only to speak everlastingly of Eugene Debs there was the young gentleman who spoke Italian fluently and whose father had in the last two years closed down his shoe repair shop to enter into a vastly more lucrative new business there were four assorted pre meds Spartan included and among them also a girl from Tenneville named Eudemonia Mackintosh Their club room was a vacant research lab in the basement of the sci building and here they repaired at odd times of the day to loll on the lab table borassing or to grind away seriously at studies The unspoken but sincerely desired aim of every member was to excel in grades—but the reasons for this were various

Early Spartan perceived that it was second nature for Milt and Eudemonia to surpass all others they did it almost effortlessly almost in the spirit of *noblesse oblige* The other pre med and the creature who spoke only to Eugene Debs and/or God went after grades as they would have mined ore they had intelligence buried

down in themselves somewhere and it was a dull hard sweaty job digging it out Spartan wanted to excel because he was perfectly con vinced that he wore his mind with the same dash that Buddy wore one of his expensive turtle necked sweaters

It was most annoying on occasion then to have that bored cynic Milton Salpinger best him with an ease that verged on the lacka daisical

Then at the end of his second month at Western he suddenly fell in love with science in general and Eudemonia Mackintosh fell in love with him

IV

The first time Eudemonia Mackintosh had ever addressed a re mark to Spartan he had earnestly desired to smack her He had so little contact with the coeds on campus that it seemed the final in justice that the one who was destined to sit next him in every class was homely the daughter of an English professor at the University of Tenneville and an honor graduate of Tenneville s largest high school to boot. From her conduct in class he knew already that she was the assertive kind and more than inclined to point out the mis takes of others in a loud kind voice

It might not have mattered, though if her body had not seem ingly been constructed out of A B-C blocks, and if upon this sturdy foundation she had not supported a rather large square head on which a determined square face had been stamped out

It was his second morning in zoo lab and he had been detained in the basement by the matinal peroration of the head janitor and was several minutes late He set up his microscope at once and with much eye watering and crossing was forcing himself to keep both eyes open as he gazed through the single tube sketching the while in his notebook

A voice to his left so loud that it caused Buddy clear at one end of the room and Milt Salpinger at the other to look up startled an nounced You re not supposed to shade in parts like that. If you want it to look darker stipple it. You know make little dots like this

Silently he favored her with one of his bleakest glances and re turned to his artistic endeavors B

Later Milt said, "She s right Spart Don t waste your time doing it all wrong until you hand in your notebook for the first time "

He took Milt s advice and then sullenly refused to accept Miss Mackintosh as a possible member of Crap She s too pushy " was his opinion

She s just horsy Milt said calmly Be a sport Spart."

She ll be a pest Spartan predicted darkly "If she s such a good ole gal why isn t she an Omega? In fact, why isn t she in the uni versity if her old man teaches there?"

Ethics or something Milt said "Teachers kids often go to some other school As to the first why aren t you in Deke?

He promised Milt silently I will be someday dammit—somehow And then acquiesced about Miss Mackintosh it mattered so little only to find that every time he sought out some empty room in the sci building to study she was there to tell him how to do it.

They finally forged a truce of sorts one Sunday morning in the basement room when Eudemonia said Sometimes I think I snap at people and get bossy with them just to beat them to the draw I want them to dislike me for my reasons not theirs "

He wished futilely that she would leave taking her disruptive self revelations with her " see why you want em to dislike you at all he grumbled

She looked directly at him and he noticed that, although her eyes were set too close together they were an attractive apple butter brown I don t want them to But they always do anyway "

She might as well have stated flatly I m nineteen I'm female and I m not pretty Is there anything more miserable more cornered and snarling in this world?

He took pity on her I—uh—always wondered what your first name means Eudemonia I mean

Oh a happiness that results from usefulness It s an Aris totelian concept Only my Dad simplified the spelling a little Her gratitude for his attention his interest was pathetic

Before they left, he kissed her Mac looked at him solemnly and then laid her body up against his Small cold fountains opened in his armpits and he wondered glumly if he was going to be able to handle this after all

But at least he announced to himself with a fine bravado it was going to be fun trying

v

Christmas vacation began on the train which came to take the students home The spirit of the season had enveloped Greek and barbarian alike and for once the charming students of Western mingled, as free of social hostilities as vipers in a pit Coeds shrilled prettily at each other in the coaches somewhere a uke twanged and the drummers in the smoker became happily confused wanting at once to appear harmless and fatherly and dangerously lecherous There was gin and a species of home brew and the inevitable dour staring mountaineer huddled in a rear seat, his jug in a gunny sack at his feet.

Almost before the train pulled out Milt Salpinger was closeted in the MEN with a Deke and two Betas his tenor treading daintily on their harsher voices The serenade was to continue with pauses for drinking from a bottle throughout most of the trip

There were several games of spin the bottle everybody welcome Spartan free of Eudemonia for a change and Buddy played with abandon. Ez Conklin had been given a Dixie cup full of pink sloe gin *'This train he yelled to the startled mountaineer "could demoralize a monk!"*

Dublin was almost at the end of the line Long since Milt had detrained on a high note and Ez Conklin departed for the home of his uncle and guardian in a pink haze As the train jerked to a stop Spartan and Buddy stood in the vestibule adjusting their swaggers Home from the scholastic wars oh Dublin prepare to make your obeisance!

And Dublin complied

vi

Then having made the hilarious trip back to Western Spartan again found himself on the train two weeks later This time he sat alone gazing down into white chasms as the train crossed trestle after trestle and wondering if this sensation of hollow regret he felt was what they called grief

The times he had not listened to her the times he had earnestly desired to shout at her to shut up the times he had unreasonably

blamed her for his penury the times he had feared her for the cuffings she dealt him and the times he had hated her for opposing his desire to go into medicine—all unconfessed and therefore unforgiven

His grandmother had died suddenly of a stroke

The last trestle was past and they were now descending into the foothills Darkness was creeping out from its hiding place behind the boulders that lay beside the tracks in an instant the train plunged into it as if into a tunnel and the lights came on He found himself looking not at the boulders tumbled down from the hills but at the reflection of his plans tumbled about himself

Spartan McClintock bank teller he said to his mirrored face He would have to stay home now to care for his mother the fierce old woman who was dead had gotten her way after all She had always been determined that she would He could go back and finish the term and then come home for good It was a fine education he would have—a better one even than that of Mr Harlan Boswell

The face he was watching indicated that this—this terrible inexorable sense of loss of an unrealized future—was what they really called grief

His mother was tired her mouth set in a hard line But her eyes met his defiantly when he saw that Grandmother was laid out in a plain pine box The Reverend Will Gates was there to pat Maude s hand ejecting comforting words to her through his protruding teeth She had a fine grown son at her side someone to stay right here always and care for her and someday when he had his own little home she would be there with her grandchildren at her knee

Glaring with the effort Maude managed No such thing!

The good reverend recoiled and for no reason Spartan remembered that once this man was supposed to have been interested in his mother

I know how distressed you are the reverend resumed tentatively The loss We must all be brave The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away——

He continued on like this uninterrupted until the end of the funeral Spartan held her gloved hand tightly in his while she shed tears painfully as though they were stones being forced from under

her lids They had had a twisted love for the old woman half affection half exasperation and pique

He did not know what people did on the first night there was a new grave He thought perhaps they went to bed early and wept But Maude got out a pencil and paper and he saw that she was writing laboriously

Insurance	$100		
Funeral	60		
	$ 40		$40
Mrs Bos s drs		$25	25
Imagene s		20	20
			$85

"You re go-ing back " Maude said.

He sighed "You can t live on that eighty-five dollars forever I'll finish up the—oh, why bother? I'll ask Mr Boswell for a job in the morning

For the first time she resembled the dead woman as her face tightened itself into a bunch about her hardened mouth "You re going back!

She went with him to the station and as the train began pulling out he very nearly jumped off to rejoin her He could not leave the small handicapped creature alone in that desolate house by herself The silence in that house was awful, though they had both once prayed for it as for a blessing

He called out from the top step I m not leaving! Wait!"

Very deliberately Maude McClintock turned her back and walked away

He came back to find Buddy distressed to tears With mid terms less than two weeks away Buddy had wakened in the middle of the night to the realization that he could not possibly pass them This meant no Deke initiation in February this meant that his father would roar and cut his allowance and worst of all it meant that he would have to go through hazing again if he remained a pledge

Belatedly Buddy had understood that the faculty of Western was disinclined to toady to the Boswell name

Spartan took pity on him Tight lipped he locked the door of

their room and went to work on Buddy He helped Buddy fake a passable notebook from his own he pounded simple rudiments of chemistry into Buddy s head he did algebra for Buddy until they both dreamed it and finally he had Buddy muttering German declensions in his sleep

Buddy passed His father raised his allowance the day after he became a full fledged Deke

VII

That summer Spartan worked again, as he did the summer after that. Buddy was around infrequently between trips to New York with the entire family hunting trips alone with his father another family trip to New Orleans, and a visit to his Cincinnati cousins The Boswell enterprises were booming and the McClintock financial ventures limped along

Every cent Spartan earned went into Maude s hand and together they counted it, greedy as misers The apportionment that each took for the coming school months was frugal to the point of deprivation Maude could depend on a certain amount of sewing but there had to be a small sum to carry her over seasonal lags So though Spartan was making more than they spent because of his partial scholarship he still could not save enough

Even with the bank account there would not be enough to get him through more than one year of med school. I've got to get it somehow " he fretted Oh, goddammit why does it have to be so expensive?

Across the kitchen table he and Maude looked at each other silently He returned to his calculations "Suppose next summer I make another ninety dollars that will all add up to——" He threw her a reprimanding glance for drumming her fingers 'Ninety plus—— Do that again!" he commanded her suddenly

She raised her brows

'That! Drumming your fingers like that. You never used to be able to——

She looked down at the hand proudly "I think " she said in her slow way I m getting better "

"I d give a pretty to know what s wrong with you The horse doctors around here don t know their—— Anyway they don t."

She grinned and challenged him 'Then you find out"

Back where they started from Only enough for one year in med Only one year only one year

VIII

In the fall of his junior year an epidemic struck down every pre med They sent for admission blanks filled them out feverishly sent for others filled them out talked endlessly about grades and quotas and money stirred their conversations with the handles of long names like University of Tenneville Medical School Vanderbilt University Medical School University of Kentucky Medical School University of Louisville Medical School and University of Tennessee Medical School and finally succumbed panting to the final stage of the disease—the long period of waiting to see if they would be accepted and by whom Then as the admissions began to drift in the relapses of fever occurred How about finishing up and getting an A B ? Or a B S ? What for? Why not? Who s going to do which? Why?

Spartan suffered a severe case in the final stages If he stayed on at Western he could break even for the year Then he could have two more summers to save for tuition No he d have them anyway the summer after next would arrive whether he had a year of med behind him or not. No but he would already have spent all the money On the other hand

Buddy wanted to stay down another year He wasn t ready for the big push yet.

Then Milt came into their room one evening himself barely convalescent. 'Lissen he said to Spartan persuasively what would you take here next year anyway? Biochem? You ll get it in med Same with embryology histology physiology and the rest of that crap Come on in with me next fall and let s get going!

Then Eudemonia Mackintosh had her say Alone one night under the trees in back of the sci building she sat up from her prone position and said to Spartan heatedly But you ve got to come up with us! The whole gang is going next fall except Fatty Boswell If you wait a year we ll all be ahead of you Do you want even plodding ole Ez getting ahead of you?

He shouted I don t have the money! I don t have the goddamn

lousy son-of a bitching mon—— He collapsed. "Mac what am I going to do?"

Marry me Eudemonia Mackintosh said "We'll live with Dad of course And he s got enough pull at the University to get you a loan or a scholarship or some damn thing

"Well I don t know " He temporized Marriage Mac as his wife An ugly thought came to him After all when he was through med there was nothing to prevent him—— But her father was an unknown in the equation possibly he could retaliate

He was close to sobbing I—just—don t—know! he yelled to her startled face

But Buddy Boswell had the last and final word That December his application to Tenneville Med was refused Grandfather Muller or no He was advised to spend another year in college to raise his grade average Spartan of course was accepted for the freshman class beginning in September 1924

IX

The second day of Christmas vacation that year the Bearcat stopped before Spartan s door

How ya Mrs McClintock " Buddy said breezily to Maude and then to Spartan "C mon my dad wants to talk to you He frowned and bethought himself Oh—I almost forgot! My mother wants to know if I could bring you over for a sno—— cup—of tea, Mrs McClintock.

Her eyes went past Buddy to Spartan This may be it! But be careful let s be cautious 'That s very kind, she was saying in her slow calm fashion

In the Boswell library Agnes seated Maude between herself and Harlan Opposite them on a mission sofa sat Buddy and Spartan

Agnes opened fire first Well it was just honestly Maude too wonderful the lovely friendship the boys had had down the years and all that Well she and Harl had been meaning forever you might say, to get better acquainted which sounds a silly thing to say to someone who made your wedding dress my goodness, Spartan seems almost like my own son, and so forth.

Harlan fared a bit better He and Agnes it seemed had been so busy recently but they had certainly been meaning oh yes in deed But what brought the whole thing back into mind was all the wonderful things Buddy had been telling them about how Spartan had helped him a bit over a rough spot here and there Nice to think of them going on to med school together wasn t it? The year after next of course Buddy wasn t you might say ready for professional school yet It was just that Buddy wasn t a bookish boy in the real sense of the word Anyway he d be a better doctor because of that not full of notions

The problem and it was a minor one was simply to get Buddy over the hump of books that still impeded his progress before he could call himself doctor

That was where Spartan came in

He was a bookish boy Yes you could say that bookish The very influence that Buddy needed for his years in medical school

Now, surely Spartan would want a degree it was such a nice thing to—— Oh—money! If he had the money he would be delighted to get a degree at Western before going ahead

Well

Money Chicken feed Make it an outright loan Send it to you just the way we send it to Buddy Both at Western and up at Tenneville No sir! Want to do it!

Insist

Maude s smile was cool. A loan only she said with all the em phasis she could muster

Well certainly didn t we say so? A loan Who was even *thinking* the word charity My goodness Maude McClintock!

Spartan thought that they need not have worried about the char ity angle Maude had a good idea of how much he had already done to earn the money But then just shoving Buddy along and tutoring him wasn t much Little enough for having his way paid with real green honest to-God legal MONEY through med school!

Shaking Mr Boswell s hand on the bargain Spartan promised him in a silent frenzy of gratitude I ll give you every cent s worth for your money Mr Boswell I swear I will!

That was the Christmas too that eighteen year-old Imagene was recovering from a bout of pneumonia Spartan realizing that

he had not seen her except at a distance for almost three years, predicted to himself that she would look thin and pale as skim milk on a cold morning

Buddy said so far it was a lousy vacation He said for Spartan few Gawd s sake to come on over and they d see if they could scare up some excitement—the place was like a tomb

Oh and bring Mrs McClintock of course Mother thought it would be swell if they could have an evening together They'd send the car around The big one

It went to his head a little He knew it and could not stop getting drunk on the thought of Boswell money His mother smiled tolerantly and squeezed his hand as they went up the steps to the front door They rang and waited.

The door opened And there was Imagene

He could not take it all in at once The blonde hair bobbed and stylishly frizzled about her lovely face her mouth full in the underlip as though still withdrawing from a kiss her eyes narrowed in the old way—but now so provocative her body breastless as a boy's in a brief sheath of chiffon that ended just below her knees His mind stumbled and in a panic he guessed what she had already done to him

All evening Imagene humbled him with her beauty and her mockery They played records and sometimes she would dance with him and sometimes not. She would come walking up to him swinging her hips to the music the long pearl necklace that hung to below her waist knotted in her thin hands Then just before he could pull her to him she would step swiftly to one side throwing back her head and flinging her arms wide To the beat of the music she made rhythmic noises with her mouth ("Like she was sucking something out of her teeth as Buddy said in disgust later) at the same time snapping her fingers and shuffling her high heeled slippers From her narrowed eyes she watched Spartan inviting him to think her exciting and jazzy He did

After a while he noticed that Buddy had disappeared

He tried wooing her with extravagant compliments and to each she drawled in loud delight That s sad! Spartie that s the saddest line I ever heard'

Then he left even vehemence behind when he begged her simply

Please, will you go to the movies with me tomorrow night? Please?
Imagene it happened was crazy about movies so she guessed she would.

Imagene drove them in the Bearcat And back under the shadow of the Boswell portico he kissed her worshipfully He wondered then humbly if she would pet with him Imagene was crazy about petting so she guessed she would

Maude seemed unusually anxious for him to return to Western

x

Well Milt demanded "did you think it over? Are you coming up with us next year Spart?

Yeah he thought it over—the fart Buddy said tilting his chair back and rocking And he s staying down here

Milt raised his brows "Do I detect a rift between our Damon and Pythias?

If you must know" Buddy said nastily "he made one big fool of himself all right all right He went and fell in love with my sister!

And that s your reason for not coming to med next fall Spart? Milt said innocently

Well no I had already about made up my mind——

Me and Spart decided we d have us some fun next year Buddy said Besides me and Spart want to stay in the same class together

Not to mention the fact, Milt said that you d flunk out five minutes after Spart left Western That s the real reason isn t it Boswell?

Buddy slammed his chair to the floor and began to sniff the air Y know Spart I could swear I smell kike in here!

Milt rose with dignity Think it over carefully Spart

Spartan silent hung his head he owed fealty to Buddy

Yet several days later Spartan sought out Milt in the basement room of the sci building Lissen Milt he said desperately lissen his old man s helping me He s going to *put me through med school* don t you understand?

Milt avoided his eyes Sure Sure I d do the same thing too in your place Maybe He scratched at an eruption on his cheek and

he had not seen her except at a distance for almost three years, predicted to himself that she would look thin and pale as skim milk on a cold morning

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mean I mean she was a woman already when we were just freshman She slopped over I could tell that a mile away And of course you had to be pretty boy and go dip your wick in it, you couldn t let a thing like that——

"Milt with it all laid out for you wouldn t you have——

"Nope

Now I guess you re going to say it was Boswellian of me!

Listen I ll tell you when you re being Boswellian don t worry I've always punctured you every time you got too flatulent, haven t I?

What are you anyway my conscience?

Naw just a fellow Crapper Hand me those shirts will you?"

Look do you have to leave this aft? Why couldn t you take the morning train with us?

And do what tonight while you and Buddy get gassed with the Dekes?

Oh Well "

Spart!

Yeah?

Write in to Tenneville and tell them you re coming up this fall Once you re past your first year you'll be able to swing a loan or something Spart you gotta shake those damn Boswells before——

I can t, Milt I just can t I can t risk not getting a loan I can t——

You can t get that sister of Buddy s out of your head you mean

I guess not

Well this is sort of it huh? We ll all be waiting for you up at the dear old pus factory in case you change your mind"

I won t Uh—so long stupid

"So long fathead

XIII

Imagene Boswell still *virgo intacta* though not by repute snake hipped her way to the Western campus in the fall of 1924 Jazzy speedy hot they were all Imagene s adjectives as were the members of the football team her coterie and all other coeds her avowed enemies She was very pretty and it was only when a rival summed

up her beauty in words—the little mouth tied in a bow between bunny-chop cheeks the habitual squint the excelsior hair—that the total was ridiculousness Her drawl had become so thick that it verged on a speech impediment and a conversation with Imagene was some what like extracting the topic under consideration from a keg of blackstrap

Her course load and the subjects she had chosen would have shamed a moron—but then, she had no intention of attending classes Her feet bore her constantly over the walk that ended at the door of the Grandstand the college hangout And her swains could have recognized her by her walk alone for she wore heels so high that she sounded as though she were trotting about on tiny hooves

It had developed that she liked frat men Thus when Deke finally offered Spartan a bid he overlooked the fact that he considered them an impossible collection of swillers phys ed majors and kindergarten intellects and accepted it eagerly

"Well Imagene observed it s time you stopped being one of those sad non-orgs I reckon I can be seen with you without being ashamed now"

Imagene spoke truly if noninclusively Even though the senior year was traditionally the season of romance of Western the class of 25 was unusually active Imagene Boswell had dared to flaunt a sacred code—that of cleaving only unto the one whose pin you wore—and had done it so successfully that the other coeds began to follow her example The seniors feeling the sincere urge to mate were reduced to wan loiterings And Imagene left in her wake loi terers of the very best. She accepted Spartan s Deke pin a Beta shield and a small gold basketball hung on a slender chain By spring everyone was quite accustomed to seeing her decorated with all three

XIV

Only the Dekes had the effrontery to select each year a girl whom they crowned Campus Queen The Betas the Kappas and the Knights also had Sweethearts but their honors were somehow not as prized by the fair candidates

Most naturally Imagene felt herself to be the ideal choice for the

Dekes signal honor The Dekes with the exception of Buddy Bos well agreed After some thought on the matter Spartan proposed that the Queen must, above all other qualifications wear but one pin on her breast and must consider herself the property of him whose pin she wore The proposal was accepted with sympathetic nods by all again with one exception

This Deke simply threw back his huge head and guffawed

His name was Hobe Wismer He was a large creature twenty two years old he was in appearance and inclinations a stallion. Very few Western girls ever went out with Hobe He made no pretenses and more than once he had called for a girl at the dorm taken her imme diately to some dark secluded spot and then returned her unwined undined and undone But most girls Hobe admitted cynically usu ally demanded a coke first

When he heard Spartan s proposal that the Dekes legislate Imagene into being his own private reserve this apparently amused Hobe greatly After uttering his loud laugh, he remarked Say remind me Mac to ask her for a date again"

Spartan passed it over Hobe had become non-existent for him even before he left the club room to search out Imagene When he found her readily enough in the Grandstand he put his proposition to her

Imagene did not care for the idea

Spartan was firm 'Do you want to be Queen or not? Believe me honey unless you give back that other junk you re wearing you re out. Get that?

Imagene rose magnificently to the occasion Jerking his pin from her blouse she threw it on the table between them 'Take your ole pin! And I still bet I can be Queen

Oh? How?

'By getting another Deke pin stupid.

"Whose—Buddy s? Spartan asked pleased with his sarcasm "Imagene no other Deke will pin you on a bet. You re up against brotherhood baby"

Imagene smiled enigmatically "You'll see"

Even Buddy wasn t sure what to think of it. After all she was his sister A louse albeit but his sister He came straight to Spartan with

his problem Spart the guys told me Imagene s got a date with Hobe Wismer tonight I know you re not pinned to her any more and all but——

Oh that damn little fool' Spartan cried.

He tried to frighten Imagene I know what you think you re going to pull But he won t give you his pin he'll give you a His voice died away He resumed as steadily as he could Please don t go out with him Imagene He s the kind of guy you can t tease He s not harmless like me he s kind of crazy on the subject

I think he s exciting Imagene drawled And I ll bet I can handle him easy He s just dated those sad nubs before The kind that know they have to give in or nobody will date them But he'll find out that little ole Imagene Boswell can wrap him right around her little——

You scare me he said miserably You re so stupid you scare me

Imagene sneered and flounced out

Hobe paid tribute to Imagene s superiority to the extent of taking her to the movies first Five rows behind them Spartan could hear Imagene giggle even above the piano After the movie Hobe bought Imagene a coke Spartan waited outside

He followed them across the dark campus guiding himself by Imagene s drawl Then she was silent and he lost them for a time as they went into the deep shadow behind the stadium

Again it was Imagene s voice that finally led him to them and he came upon her struggling half sobbing half giggling unable to believe that she was being raped He shouted something or perhaps merely made some loud horrified noise and threw himself at them Imagene yipped thinly

Hobe made it to his feet Spartan hanging on him trying to grapple with him With a single snort of exasperation the huge Hobe broke Spartan s nose

He staggered in a half-circle before stumbling to his knees He rose sobbing with rage to fight with Hobe until he had killed or was himself killed and saw that Hobe was gone Casually gone

Imagene s crying fell dismally on the soft night He picked her up brushed her off and extracted bits of stick and grass from her frizzy

hair Looking down at her tearful silly face it struck him that he had conducted himself like an idiot for this mauled frightened little fool He wiped her tears and his blood with the same handkerchief If he was to go on loving her—and he was drearily certain that he would—he would have to find some way in which he could do it and still respect himself

"You ve bawled enough he said He debated a technical ques tion and phrased it Are you all right?

" All right, Imagene snuffled " Ought to kill him Try to make a fool of me

"Shut up he told her He didn t just try he succeeded And when they see my nose tomorrow they re all going to know pretty much what happened Hobe Wismer had the sense to treat Imagene Boswell just like the little bitch she is You ve got one chance to save your face—and that s me He ripped the gold basketball from her neck and tore off the Beta shield I ll give these back to the guys who own them Your play party days are over There s only one thing the half wits around here can t stand and that s ridicule And right now you re completely ridiculous Now then—do you want my pin back or not?

"Could I still go out with——"

Oh don t be such a fool! Listen Imagene if you re smart, you'll take this chance even with all the strings attached And believe me those strings are going to stay They might as well you won t be back here next fall "

She said uncertainly Why I surely will be! I certain——

"You re flunking out You ve flunked out! You ve had your college and you ve had your fun Now all you got left is me I ll see to it that you leave in a blaze of glory You ll be Campus Queen since it means so much to you at least you ll have that. But remember—I come with it. And one more thing If ever I hear of you going out with anyone else and *especially* taking down your pants for any more of those football——

You can t talk——"

"I repeat Imagene if you ever take down your pants again for anybody—but me—I ll break—*your*—nose I mean that."

She gasped "How can you be so mean?

Because I love you And because I m not offering you a silly god damn pin I m offering you my life I m offering you the only chance

you ll ever have of being somebody—of getting out of Dublin There s no one there for you Imagene And no college will have you now—so what other man do you have but me? I mean one who really wants to marry you and not just lay you

Imagene thoughtfully did not answer

He appealed to her further Catch on honey I m going places! Once I get out of med school, nothing is going to stop me I m not coming back to Dublin to be a hick doctor in a hick town I m going to leave Dublin so far behind that——

I ll bet Imagene said in a strange pensive voice you will at that I m thinking hard about you Spartan McClintock.

How about it then?

I ll want a lot Imagene said I want to live in a big city and have a wonderful house and all the cars and clothes and servants I——

That s understood Imagene I love you—you re going to marry me aren t you?

Why yes *Imagene said with singular calm* I reckon I am

Buddy was reading *College Humor* when Spartan got back to their room Without a word he snatched the magazine from Buddy s hand and threw it across the room

Well fer Gawd s—— Hey what happened to your no——

Never mind about my nose Listen Buddy if you think I stayed out of med school just to watch you bone up on *College Humor* you re crazy I promised your old man I d get you a degree and I m by Gawd going to do it!

Buddy began You don t own me who do you——

I do own you you and Imagene both as long as your old man is footing the bills I ve let you two get away with murder all year while I acted like the biggest ass this side of the Mississippi Now get out that embryology notebook of mine and start copying Or do you think I ought to do that for you too? Along with wiping your nose I mean

Well fer Gawd s sake, Buddy said as he went to the desk opened a drawer and got out Spartan s notebook.

Spartan lay down on his bed and smiled up at the ceiling Only don t copy my stuff too good I m making the highest grade anybody

ever did in that course and it ll look funny as hell if a cretin like you turns up with a notebook half as good "

After a while he dozed off to the sound like a miniature cannonade of Buddy s pen industriously stippling away

He awoke only because Buddy was cautiously sliding off his shoes for him Thought you d be more comfortable Buddy muttered apologetically

Forget about me and go back to work Spartan said coldly He grinned at Buddy s beefy back By God, he thought, something s happened to me!

XV

Spartan McClintock A.B was the only member of his class to graduate *summa cum laude* Buddy Boswell came through with flying *C s* and because of his degree was accepted into the freshman class at Tenneville Med for the fall term 1925

Imagene Boswell s father received a letter from the registrar stating that Imagene would not be allowed to reregister at Western for the fall term It was the opinion of the faculty that she was not college material

But that was all right because Mrs Boswell announced Imagene s engagement to one Spartan McClintock in the Dublin *Runner* the next day

Now indeed Spartan McClintock owned the younger Boswells He was completely responsible for the two of them

BOOK II

Onset and Symptomatology

TENNEVILLE is really Chicago in microcosm Situated by a wide bend of the river it was even in 1925 a lusty industrial and trading town But because it maintained its own university the only one in the state Tenneville mistakenly considered itself the genteel seat of Kennassee culture

Around the university itself were clustered the houses wherein Respectability dwelt one such home belonging to a widow of mildewed refinement, a Mrs Dunnock When pressed Mrs Dunnock would admit that occasionally she opened her lovely home to paying guests And these guests coincidentally were invariably medical students who took up residence promptly in September and stayed until the following June The next fall to Mrs Dunnock s expressed surprise the social sojourn was repeated. Each year the guests moved down a story the new seniors roomed on the first floor the new juniors on the second and so on with the lowly freshman alternately roasting or freezing the term away in the attic In the fall of 1925 two new attic-dwellers were Buddy Boswell and Spartan McClintock recommended to their hostess by Milton Salpinger

Their trip up on the train their loud talk about cadavers and major surgery so fascinating to their fellow passengers in the smoker had been inspiring for both Spartan and Buddy But newly in the presence of old friends they wilted The realization that Milt and Ez, and even Militant Mac (living across the quad with her father) knew every word in those huge new texts stacked on his desk awed and unnerved Spartan Stuck up here in the attic with Buddy and six other bewildered freshmen and hearing Milt s tenor drift up from the third floor below he was suddenly both lonesome and bitter He belonged down on third and for an instant as he looked at Buddy s jolly-dog grin he resented him It was the first time that having to stay at Western and wait for Buddy had rankled

Then he grew ashamed of himself

The first night they lay in their beds and listened to a warm September wind rush through the trees outside Out of the darkness Buddy s voice came thin and frightened Spart lissen do you honestly think I can learn all that stuff in those books?

Still mindful of his ingratitude to the Boswells earlier in the day and speaking directly to the image of Mr Boswell in his mind Spartan said stoutly Hell yes you can Buddy I ll get us through this if it s the last thing I do!

ii

Into Spartan s life were to come two persons Lucilla who was dead and Dr Augustus Meunch whom he was fervently to wish dead These two were to occupy his thoughts daily and nightly respectively to fascinate and terrify him while the rattled Buddy hovered near afraid to stay and unable to run away

Lucilla was an admirably thin mulatto cadaver chosen by Spartan from the tank in the basement of the anatomy building Enlightened by Milt beforehand Spartan avoided the succulently fat bodies that floated past him in the tank and unhesitatingly pulled Lucilla to the side a she drifted past Buddy mute at the macabre scene in the basement the cackling old man who presided over it and Spartan s housewifely efficiency in choosing the quality grade of meat only stared when Lucilla's delicate carcass was slammed on a cart and trundled over to an elevator Delighting in his astuteness in choosing the finest cadaver in the tank and a female at that Spartan s mind barely recorded Buddy s timid suggestion that they name her Imagene We ll call her Spartan said smugly running through Dublin s female population in his mind and lighting on the town s most ardent gossip Lucilla It would be a pleasure he opined outwardly facetious inwardly eager to dissect her

The top floor of the anatomy building was entirely given over to the dissecting lab There along with her confreres Lucilla was placed on a table beside which stood a bucket and two stools Overhead were large ceiling lights that one knew would glare down on printed page and bared bones The odor in the room warm from the September sun was almost overpowering to the uninitiated

On the first morning of his freshman year Spartan stood with Buddy by Lucilla s side looking at the door expectantly A Gray s *Anatomy* the back still uncracked rested at Lucilla s feet and at her head the case of shining dissecting instruments He felt alert impatient and quite happy Then Dr Augustus Meunch professor of anatomy appeared in the doorway Almost a dwarf he paused and surveyed the freshman class of 1925 The class returned the gaze frankly and then doubtfully Dr Meunch was ugly of feature as well as figure and it was suddenly apparent to the class that his temper could be equally unpleasant A chill of apprehension wafted over the room as Dr Meunch clumped to the lecture platform There he stood squatly surveying the class again this time smiling with a cruel contempt.

'I wish he announced in a rich German accent to pull an old chestnut Each of you gentlemen will please shake hands with the one on either side of you Thank you

He thrust his hands into his lab coat and laughed insultingly Of the gentlemen whose hands you hold only one of you will be left at the end of the year If that many I will call the roll ADAMS! ATKINS! "

Dr Meunch s chestnut was the mental torture that other less effectual college professors always fondly hoped it to be The terror of having been left behind of being incapable of catching up filled Spartan again Listening to Buddy s nervous squeak Here' as his name was called his hand still wet from Buddy s clasp Spartan thought oh God it s going to be a job to pull myself through let alone carry Buddy on my back.

Overnight life became a bad dream in broken English Gus Meunch did not lecture he either harangued or nagged From the first he accused the class of being slow mentally retarded clumsy lazy and insolent When his morning diatribe was over he stalked among the tables peering up fiercely poking into cadavers asking questions and always always criticizing abusively the slightest error or the most insignificant of misunderstandings He made it quite plain that he loathed them all.

With the rest, Spartan cringed whenever Gus approached. In one week he had learned to hate this hideous little creature with all the

fervid emotionalism of a lover And in the next week he was horrified to discover that he worshiped him as well

Almost at once frenzy became the routine Day and night the dissecting tables were surrounded by haggard students the drone of their voices as one partner read aloud from Gray s guiding the other who dissected sounding like a mournful litany Those who earlier in the year had chosen plump cadavers as they would have geese now found the pages stuck together with grease,from their fingers They eyed Lucilla covetously remarking loudly that anybody could dissect as neatly as Spartan if they had her to work on

Even on Sundays the cutting hacking probing stripping and murmurous litany continued for the ambitious spent seven days a week at their task From the Christian Science Church that thrust itself against the anatomy building on the corner of the campus came the voices of the congregation raised in song

October was bathed in the golden twilight of the year Then the dusk and cold of November seeped into the anatomy building The windows were closed and the harsh lights overhead and the radiators came on Slowly passively resisting Lucilla gave up her structural secrets The muscles she had once used to execute a simple hop-skip-and jump revealed an interrelationship that neared perfection her plumbing on the other hand had the universal aspects of inefficiency Her faults and virtues spoke to Spartan awake and asleep in a continual murmur in his own and Buddy s voice Her arm with the muscles shredded away from the bone her chest with the ribs spread like the skeleton of a beached ship became the internal environment of his mind Whole chunks of time went by when he did not think of Imagene at all She grew as dim in his mind as the innocuous gentilities of Mrs Dunnock at supper as remote as the unctuous jibes of Milt Salpinger

Only Lucilla would ever demand or receive so much of him again

Early in the semester it had come as a vast surprise to all freshmen that Augustus Meunch bore in his breast a pure selfless love for another creature—though not a human being to be sure

Gus loved an Airedale he had brought with him from Heidelberg a great snarling barking creature called Barbarossa Any student insane enough to entertain the notion of sucking up to Gus in his office off the dissecting room underwent a rapid return to normality upon tapping on the door Through the opaque glass pane a huge

shadow could be seen to hurl itself at the door and a deep blood-lusting growl clogged the ears of the would be visitor with terror

As the days grew drear and a kind of icy mush fell from the skies obscuring even the steeple of the Christian Science Church next door Barbarossa became increasingly fierce Students passing the office back and forth to lab took to treading lightly loath to rouse Bar barossa with their passing But the heavy footed Buddy always sent the dog into a passion of irritation. Buddy reciprocated finally Spar tan no longer heard his outbursts on the subject.

Gus left his office each day at four for a brief coffee session with Dr Goste of the Department of Pathology And one afternoon to Buddy s sensitized ears at least Barbarossa s lonesome howlings grew unendurable Spartan droning away from Gray s hardly noticed as Buddy suddenly dipped into the bucket and retrieved one of Lucilla s discarded fingers He had a brief glimpse of Buddy s haggard face lit with a kind of crazy inspiration before he sped away

Spartan followed, arriving at the hall in time to see Buddy rapping on Gus s door with the finger Inside Barbarossa was hurling himself against the door the glass rattling as his heavy body struck the wood 'Buddy you fool——

He was at Buddy's side just as Buddy opened the door Leaping high Barbarossa came at them Spartan kicked with all his strength his shoe catching the animal just under the muzzle sending it back wards to land against Gus s desk. Buddy slammed the door to

All the way back to their table Spartan relieved himself of his opinions of Buddy s conduct. Then he remembered Lucilla s finger It was in Gus s office Buddy had accomplished his mission—he had thrown Barbarossa a bone

Concluding his lecture the next morning Gus took Lucilla s finger from his lab-coat pocket and held it up before the class "I will take care of feeding my dog myself thank you! The class cowered as he began his rounds He stopped at each table to inspect the partners tapping the bone lightly against his left wrist. The morale of the room was a degree above panic.

When he came to Spartan and Buddy he stood regarding them malevolently Automatically Spartan began to dissect with great brilliancy and verve raising his little fingers like a Dublin matron at

fervid emotionalism of a lover And in the next week he was horrified to discover that he worshiped him as well

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Word of the Dissection spread to Mrs Dunnock s and both Milt and Ez had words of consolation to offer "Any good proctologist could give him advice on what to do with that dog of his " Milt said with a comforting grin But as the days passed Spartan began to glower inwardly telling himself that they couldn t really comprehend what a riding from Gus was like

Now when Buddy s spirits sagged damply and he pleaded with Spartan for a respite from work and grinding Spartan only hounded him the more driving them at night as mercilessly as Gus did during the day He was doing it not for Buddy s sake any more but his own In their chill attic room he kept them awake with naggings and recriminations and coffee and his hatred of Gus When nothing else could prevent his lids from drooping he picked up the mountainous Gray s and paced the floor chanting from it.

The Dissection continued with only a twenty four hour break for Thanksgiving Over his turkey Milt looked first at the nervous Buddy and then at the glum evil tempered Spartan And thus " he remarked to the heap of dressing on his plate are the mighty brought low Spartan dear have some more humble pie you re looking so thin these days "

"Go to hell Spartan snapped

Why boys Mrs Dunnock said I ll thank you wall to remember you re guests in this house and——

IV

For an early Christmas present, Gus threw a surprise quiz one bleak Tuesday morning Half the class knew it had failed hopelessly just as Spartan was certain he had been letter perfect Gus came out of his office to return the papers the class stilling as though Death were marching through it choosing with one fat dwarf finger you and you and you

At their table Gus ignored Spartan and tossed Buddy s paper to him Buddy grinned weakly at learning that his answers had been 80 per cent correct.

"So " Gus said You are turning out to be a student Mr Boswell?"

Yes" Buddy muttered Sir I—uh——" He snickered idiotically

Gus chuckled and started to turn away Then as if an after thought he tossed Spartan s paper on the table his tiny eyes mocking Spartan s defensive glowering There was no grade on Spar tan s paper, only the notation See me in my office four thirty P M

They had lunch with Milt and Ez Over grilled cheese sandwiches and Cokes Spartan s paper was discussed fulsomely Milt decided serenely Aw, the old boy s bark is worse than his bite And Ez nodded *sagely while picking at a chronic sore on his neck*

I guess I could go to the dean about it Spartan fretted I mean he s got no right to bust me just because he doesn t like the way I part my hair

Or kick his dog Milt corrected him cheerfully

Not that we re not sorry for you " Ez put in hastily

Angry enough to snarl Spartan turned on the thin jittery Ez. "And you know where you can stick your pity! *And quit picking at that chancre on your neck!*

Ez sighed My mistake And it s an ingrown hair he added with injured dignity He drained the rest of his Coke while pushing back his chair I m off to the pus factory girls

Spartan sulked disdaining to acknowledge Ez s departure

"Beat up any sick kittens lately Spart? Milt asked pointedly

to hell Spartan advised him

You dear dear boy Milt said you egomaniac-son-of a bitch You never notice anybody but yourself do you?

I don t know what you re talk——

Ez I m talking about Ez Take a good look at him one of these days Sometime when you re not worrying about whether Gus loves you

Spartan was too engrossed in his own troubles to discern the note of concern in Milt s voice

Promptly at four thirty that afternoon he laid aside his lab coat and presented himself at Gus s office At his knock the mighty shadow of Barbarossa leaped up against the pane and then col lapsed at Gus s command

Spartan entered gingerly his left eye vainly attempting to cow Gus his right Barbarossa In his pocket was concealed his scalpel

and he gripped his hand over it nervously sweating [illegible] now released crawled to Spartan on its belly and [illegible] thrusting up its muzzle

Hey there old boy Spartan said foolishly [illegible] his hand on the bristly head lest Gus be confused as to which of them was being addressed.

You want to pat me on the head now Mr McCl[illegible] suggested Make friends with me too?"

No sir" Spartan said promptly then [illegible] saying Yes decided, The hell with it, and [illegible] feeble glare

Gus sniggered Under the desk Spartan could [illegible] clear of the floor 'Tell me Gus said curiously [illegible] ing that peasant Boswell? You love him, perhaps [illegible] like my Barbarossa like a pet?

"Well we ve been friends all our lives [illegible] are—pretty nice people Spartan waved [illegible] His family covered the scalpel meant for Barbarossa [illegible] into his pocket

"His pretty nice people help you with money? [illegible] with a sudden artful thrust

Yes sir Spartan said at once defiant [illegible]

Umm I was merely wondering why [illegible] were teamed together You may go Then as [illegible] door Gus called him back, Oh yes your [illegible] to the what the grade was But I warn you McClintock [illegible] more than ever now I expect more of you than [illegible] that I get it!"

Spartan was dismissed with a flip of the [illegible] stood a moment daring to indulge in a vast and [illegible]

From that day until vacation time Gus was [illegible] lessly than ever Buddy Boswell developed a [illegible] had him pecking like a chicken at words addressed to him [illegible] was banter in Gus s brutality and gradually the [illegible] Yet there tan perspiring after a bout began to sip cautious [illegible]

Freed of his burden of Gus s malice Spartan [illegible] quite [illegible] table in the evenings Buddy bubbled but Ma [illegible] on their [illegible]

umph not as much as he did at Ez. And Ez sat picking at his neck, trying to join in the fun His smile was faint though and the lifted hand had the weightless tremor of a claw

My God! Spartan s startled gaze said to Milt and Milt s replied Yeah that s what I ve been trying to tell you I think he s got T B

Later Spartan sought out Milt and voiced his suspicions

"You re not trying to tell me are you Milt said that you give a good goddamn Anyway *I m taking the guy home with me* Christmas and turning my old man loose on him Ez s uncle or guardian or whatever the guy is certainly won t give a damn So I guess we have to

Right! Spartan said sturdily ignoring Milt s raised brow

On the final night before the holidays the boys stood around Mrs Dunnock at the piano and sang carols Spartan had one arm draped over Ez the other over Buddy Across from him Milt, similarly draped over Joe Moreno and How Estes sang in his honey gold tenor

Milt so fervently commanded them all to *Fall on your knees* that Spartan obeyed hands piously pointed together while Ez sank beside him in a silent spasm of laughter Looking at the thin flushed face beside him Spartan thought You poor unlucky bastard God don t let anything like that ever happen to me

Mrs Dunnock swung around on the piano stool at the conclu sion and said Milt dear that was lovely! Yes yes lovely!

The singing over Milt wanted urgently to drink beer Spartan must come along he insisted as well as Buddy Ez clawing at his ulcer again trotted breathlessly through the cold streets with them

In a small back room of a German grocery they and other med students converged to drink home brew from genuine steins Milt was still in a singing mood and with a lusty modesty that was more revealing than pride the students joined him in announcing

I m only a poor medical student,
My mother makes synthetic gin
My sister makes love for a livin —
My God how the money rolls in!"

At the end of each chorus Mrs Dunnock s paying guests banged their steins on the table and assured each other in falsetto voices that Milt was indeed yes yes lovely

In the midst of the hilarity it came to Spartan suddenly that tomorrow he would be with Imagene

v

When the train pulled in it seemed that Dublin was still the same but riding home in the Boswell s new Buick Spartan and Buddy bent startled gazes on one face after another There was that sophisticate with the long dangling ear bobs and the lemon hair sleek and close to her head as a boy s Her talk was all of new hemlines and looking at some really nice crystal patterns and she addressed her gaping fiance in a brisk voice as lover Her name he gathered in dismay was Imagene

Next to Imagene was a crisp woman with bobbed hair who nodded at Spartan roguishly grinned at his discomfiture and insisted on holding his hand She suddenly seemed too young a person for a grown man like himself to be calling Mother

In front, next to the babbling woman—the one who was almost frumpy compared to the other two—was a hearty gentleman who unplugged his cigar from his mouth only long enough to discourse on Wall Street money and fliers before stoppering it again

All in all it was so confusing that Spartan did not start on the subject of Gus until five minutes after he and Maude had entered the old Taliaferro house alone But it seemed that Buddy had already told the whole story in a letter home

In her slow fashion Maude told him that Buddy had said he would have quit med school in two weeks if it hadn t been for Spartan

"Buddy wrote that? Buddy did? Well I'll be he s sure a swell ole guy isn t he'

For some unknown reason Maude looked the slightest touch doubtful.

vi

When young Mrs Doctor McClintock to-be called her future husband lover she did so for a delightful reason She expected him

to live up to the appellation and he complied ardently eyes closed The home of the departed Ole Man Boswell still perfumed slightly with the sour smell of old age creaked about them with the cold But in the parlor a fire burned brightly in the grate and Spartan himself was ablaze After the first shock he was overwhelmed by Imagene He found the sophisticate even more enchanting than the frizzy haired vamp had been If put to the choice he would probably not have been able to say which one he could have lived without—Imagene or Lucilla

He gasped to her out of a sudden great passion for the truth a whopping lie Imagene honey do you know I think of you all the time? I do I think of you constantly I get so lonely for you I could die I can t eat or sleep or study or (My Gawd Buddy *surely* hasn t mentioned to her about that night him and Milt and me all went down to that cat house on the river!) breathe without thinking of you——

You better not Mrs Doctor McClintock to-be said complacently She stirred Lover hand me my cigarettes will you?

He beseeched her Imagene do you love anybody? Even me?

Sometimes she murmured Like now

He cradled her sleek head in his hands I feel like I m married to you Don t you feel that way? Already married to me?

Oh in a way But you can t feel married—really married—until you have your own smart little apartment and all your nice things

Feeling married for Imagene was somewhat like the inventory a householder attaches to his fire insurance policy

and in some *big* city Lover I want to live in New York! Or at least Chicago I want to be rich a lot richer than I am and I want to have all the clothes in the world! I want people to point at me and say There s that slick Imagene McClintock isn t she stylish? I want to go to Broadway shows and have everybody know I m married to a famous surgeon——

Well honey I hadn t exactly planned on specializing in sur——

Oh any old thing! As long as we Spartie! Lissen! This friend of mine—you don t know her we went to Ashby Moore together—anyway she s married to a chiropractor! He s only twenty two years old and he made six thousand dollars last year and he

didn t have to go to school half as long as you do Why *you* could be a chiropractor just like that, and we could——

"Fer Gawd s sake!" he roared. "A quack! A—a—I m the out standing member of the freshman class and you tell me I should——"

"Oh don t be so touchy Spartie? Lover?"

"Well—all right, he grumbled

After a while he proved wordlessly that he would forgive her for anything, always

VII

Spartan and Buddy returned to Mrs Dunnock s late on a Sunday night. On their way up to the attic they paused at Milt s open door He raised his round face from a book and gave them his avuncular smile All full of Mother's Goodies and Peace on Earth?"

"None on earth" Buddy yapped fatuously 'but there was a sweet little piece I had in the back seat of our Buick."

"Lovely Milt said "yes yes lovely

There was a suitcase on Ez s bed Milt s was turned down All the open books on the study table faced in Milt s direction

"Ez didn t come back with you" Spartan said

Dad found him a bed in a san outside of Nashville He'll be back in a semester or so That was a tuberculous ulcer on his neck all right

"Why the poor guy!' Buddy burst out, causing Milt to stare at him thoughtfully "Gee the poor guy Gee what a shame!"

VIII

Mid terms were over and the dissecting room was as Buddy put it, "Like a morgue" Gus had wielded his ax without mercy and though Spartan and Buddy emerged unscathed they were spattered with the blood of the men who had had the tables on either side of them Lucilla or what remained of her lay wrapped in vaseline bandages looking tinier than ever and lonesome

With the spring thaw the talk was all of fraternities and hell week. Spartan was bid AKK, and this time it was Buddy who rode in on

Spartan s influence Together they were given two toothbrushes and a bucket They were to fill the bucket from the river and return to the quad a distance of three miles each way, and they were to walk. The river water was then to be used in the scrubbing of General Lee s statue with the toothbrushes

As a further humiliation Spartan was surprised to learn that the upperclassmen had formed rather disrespectful opinions of the Out standing Member of the Freshman Class They called him with all the smugness of having stumbled upon a bon mot, Fartin Mc-Clintock

And we want every goddamn inch of that statue scrubbed. Get it, Fartin'?

Uh yessir, muttered the unfrocked Outstanding Member of the Freshman Class Groaning they set off into the chill spring night.

Some hours later a genial Milt happened to be strolling across the quad Well well Back playing fraternity boy again huh *Fartin?*

Spartan continued with his endeavors 'Now dammit, Milt, I don t have to listen to you call me that!

During this exchange Buddy had been scrubbing busily his body bent in an uncomfortable crouch And I d even forgot ole General Lee had a horse

ix

After the thaw spring herself came hesitating outside the opened windows of the dissecting room reluctant to enter and mingle her perfumes with the odor of formaldehyde As the warm weather came on fingers grew lax in their clasp on scalpels and paragraphs were read over and over for the sense in them

Spartan and Buddy had moved Lucilla over to one of the vacant tables by a window and there they worked as dreamily as gardeners putting out bulbs under a warm morning sun Even Gus drew his head out of his shoulders walking more like a man than an homunculus as he made his rounds among the tables His accent grew less harsh and now seemed faintly touched with nostalgia as are Viennese waltzes and German drinking songs

But of all the harbingers of spring only one would have been necessary to presage the coming of the gentle season Buddy Boswell had fallen sweetly swooningly in love

She was a member of the congregation of the near by Christian Science Church As the Sundays went by Buddy sat mooning at the dissection room window waiting for her to appear She wore her sleek dark hair in a Dutch cut and frequently upon coming out of the church removed her little black cloche hat so that the sun struck red from her dark bangs and crown

"Looka that now isn t that sweet? Buddy sighed

Spartan delving into Lucilla muttered Are you nuts? Even if you met her what would you do? Tell her all about the great big doctor you re going to be?

Reasoning left untouched the smitten Buddy He yearned from one Sunday to the next And it isn t sex, he protested indignantly "This is the purest—well—it s a sorta *pure* feeling if you get what I mean

His grin was idiotic.

Then one Sunday Buddy rose dressed carefully whistling a Christian Science hymn the while and left the boarding house Spartan lay abed retreating from a mild hangover and realized slowly that Buddy had gone out into the morning to tryst

Rousing Milt Salpinger Spartan confided in him Together the two made their way to the anatomy building to watch the courtship of William Jennins Boswell

Idly humming hymns along with the voices of the congregation drifting out on the warm air Milt watched Spartan at work. You re good you know it? he said once

Spartan s grin suddenly felt on his face the way Buddy s looked

Then Milt changed his position and looked alert Hey I think they re coming out

They were blobs of people spilling out the door women s voices high in the still air the print dresses and floppy garden hats shifting constantly among the men s business suits like colors in a kalei doscope Well I ll be damned Milt breathed

The girl with the Dutch cut was chatting with Buddy Boswell as she came out on the steps He bobbed like a marionette from person to person as she introduced him to other members of the congre gation Even from the second story Milt and Spartan could see his

cheeks were cherry red, strung on either end of a long stem of a smile

Say, got a spare penis or something around we could toss him?" Milt said eagerly

Spartan waved a hand at Lucilla s nether regions "What do you think?"

Milt turned again to the window in time to see Buddy disappear into a car after the little Dutch girl. Together they watched until the car disappeared around the corner

I suppose Milt said suddenly "you re still engaged to Buddy's sister?"

"Yes"

Milt laughed "Unbristle" He looked out of the window for a moment Reason I brought it up I m thinking of going around a little with Militant Mac I was just afraid that——"

Don t be" Spartan said positively "Mac s a good kid but that s been over with for almost two years now I m—too far gone on Imagene I can t see another girl for dust. Not even a roll in the hay any more"

"Understand" Milt said carefully "I'm not out to start anything with Mac Not in any way Fact is there s a Nancy Meyers at Pea body I ve got my eye out for But in the meantime I like Mac as a person

Sure" Spartan said easily "Me too"

There was a pause Milt suddenly shed his avuncular tone and said for him, rather diffidently "Spart, let s go into practice together Run a nice little clinic or something You know what I mean? We ll both practice a damn good brand of medicine one of these days And we d keep each other on his toes Boswell s a good pet to have around but he s not for you."

Spartan dropped a bit of Lucilla s flesh into the bucket and leaned his elbows on the table 'Where do you intend to interne?'

"Oh Cincinnati, maybe

Regretfully Spartan shook his head "You re stopping too low down on the scale for me Milt Try for New York or Chi and take a resi dence while I follow after you Then we could talk business"

"Well, I can see where this is leading." Milt slid off the window sill and came to stand opposite Spartan "I thought for a while you d for

gotten all that crap—going after the big money and [illegible] just what is it you really want Fartin'?"

I want all I can get that's all! What the hell, [illegible] confidence in yourself or something?

Milt stared at him for a moment "It's going to be [illegible] esting watching you he said slowly "Mighty interesting [illegible]"

Spartan worked on in silence for almost ten minutes, [illegible] ing him closely

Back to his avuncular tone Milt said finally, "[illegible] me putter around with you Sunday mornings? [illegible] know and there's some things you miss thatta way"

Spartan feeling a touch flattered made himself [illegible] Lucilla don't mind I don't

Lucilla now revealed her secrets of procreation [illegible] and on Sunday Spartan gradually took the [illegible] Milt Careful you pfool! he would scream [illegible] delicate bit of probing then would continue in [illegible]

und anastomoses mit der overian artery, [illegible]"

To their delight, Buddy continued to [illegible] Luff Spartan sighed in the accent that had [illegible] "Luff has come to our liddle Villie

Yes yes Milt said Yes yes [illegible]

x

By the time their sophomore years were [illegible] had found out that he was a medical student, [illegible] to see Buddy ever ever again and Buddy [illegible] and then hammered on Bettye's door one [illegible] had to let him in and Buddy and Bettye [illegible] Bettye's father was so upset that he took Buddy [illegible] ambiguously about the symptoms of stomach [illegible] assured him that stomach walls are not [illegible] then asked for the fair Bettye's hand [illegible] it although what they were going to do [illegible] in the family they didn't know—by that [illegible] summer passed and Buddy waited only [illegible] then Spartan knew it was indeed luff"

XI

There was a let up their junior year They were past most of the horrors of having to memorize one thick book after another, and were entering the stages of learning to apply what had been pounded into their heads by rote

Ez Conklin had come wandering back that fall twenty pounds heavier an unhealthy flabby robustness about him that betokened his twelve months complete bed rest and six months semi ambulatory state He was still nervous and tended to tire easily but he intended to finish his medical education by slow stages He referred to himself quite jovially as a lunger " and showed no offense when he was addressed as Camille right to his wistful face

Seniors like Milt Salpinger had suddenly become lordly they were as busy weaving themselves bedside manners as silkworms a cocoon They dashed about on O B at all hours of the night and the phone in the first floor back hall rang for them constantly Spartan was awed and envious he could not wait with patience for his own chance

Now he found that he had gathered to himself the lost Ez as well as his regular charge Buddy They baaed after him tried to keep up with his drinking and his scholarship and did not too badly Buddy on the former and Ez on the latter He had their problems as well as his Buddy s unhappy love affair and Ez s fearful reaching out for a secure rest period interspersed life

Spartan s own troubles were slight there was only money and Imagene to worry about. As for the money Mr Boswell s stock-market fliers were increasingly successful he lavished funds on Buddy and came almost to the point of bellicosity when Spartan would not accept the same treatment. Spartan gave in gracefully

As Thanksgiving came on he and Imagene indulged in a spat via correspondence He wanted her to come to Tenneville for the holiday as he had only the day itself off She could not see making the long tiresome trip crossing almost half the state and the backbone of mountains that bisected it for one day with him He sulked via return mail and followed with a letter saying that he had been invited to the Mackintoshes for a turkey dinner anyway He somehow forgot to mention that Milt and Ez had also been invited.

Imagene replied tartly that he could have dinner and go to bed with that fat frumpy vamp for all she cared He had anyway she knew some of the things he had been up to at Western too

He replied that Buddy s girl was away and that Buddy wanted to go rabbit hunting on Thanksgiving and that he and Ez were going with him besides he loved Imagene and would show her a thing or two about beds if he had her with him at the moment This was written at 1 00 A M

He forgot also to mention that Milt had asked him not to accept the Mackintosh invitation No use dangling yourself in front of Mac Milt said succinctly

"Why Miltie Spartan said Don t you consider your own rosy cheeks a tasty morsel?

I m a fat slob as far as Mac is concerned Milt said complacently "Which is all right with me Nancy likes me that way

Well how about Camille then?

Mac scares the pants offa Camille Milt said She s getting almost too goddamned militant for me If I didn t know better I d swear she was a virgin

You don t know better Spartan said

Milt conceded the point. By all means let s be Southern gentlemen

Thanksgiving arrived a drab damp somehow invigorating day The three hunters started out in a roadster Spartan had borrowed from a fellow AKK bundled in Mackinaws scarves ear muffs a hunting cap which had hung on the hat rack in Mrs Dunnock s second floor hall for the past five years unclaimed and carrying with them a thermos of coffee a large sack of sandwiches and a flask of white mule

Buddy drove Ez sat next and Spartan on the outside the guns sticking up behind his right ear He felt exuberant free and as he said to his companions hebephrenic There was an excitement about rattling along through the foothills at thirty five miles an hour spurting through towns still sleeping that made him want to yell

He took one nip of the white mule to warm himself and then roared a song as they sped along *"Ach du lieber Augustine——*

"Can t we forget Gus Meunch one day?" Ez complained, shivering

"Dean Meunch dear boy Spartan said severely

C

All right he s dean now I forgot Ez persisted But I still don t want to think about him Just to hear his name and I break out in a rash of T B

They were climbing now and the cold became more penetrating The countryside in the gray light was sparse of vegetation and the few farms were decorated with hovels crouching in semiarable fields But the woods that the farms barely held at bay were dense with evergreens and silence rolled from them heavy as a weight upon the ears

When they were about twenty five or thirty miles out of Tenne ville they crossed the county line Now they were ready to stop any where and do a bit of hunting The citizenry of this county were as notorious for their laxity in enforcing the hunting laws as they were for being ignorant and impoverished Yet they wanted the dubious favor of being left alone by the rest of the world and resented deeply an intrusion however it might be for their own good

Buddy pulled off the road drove into a glade under the trees and parked What do you say we try our luck?

It seemed as good a place as any They clambered out stretching and slapping their thighs and looking about Spartan breathed in the autumn fragrant air and grinned God I like this!

They swigged deeply from the thermos packed their guns over their shoulders and set off through the woods By noon Spartan and Buddy had bagged a rabbit apiece and Ez had nearly dampened himself with buck fever when he missed one by a millimeter The coffee was now a stale odor emanating from the thermos like a memory and the sandwiches were gone They sat on a small rise and looked out over a rocky farm

Ez was tired and looked it though he tried to conceal his weari ness by sitting up straight and whistling Spartan who had nipped more than once from the white mule discovered that he was almost in pain from thirst

Of all the fools he burst out We didn t bring any water!

Buddy looked at him as though miles and miles of salt water heaved between them and land I thought you had a bottle of it in your pocket!

Ignoring him Spartan stood up and looked down on the dismal farm crouching on the edge of the gray day Let s go down there

Ez arose and groaned Are you sure it wouldn t be easier to walk back to Tenneville?

"You take it easy Spartan said 'I'll bring some back in the thermos

"Naw The farmer might have some good looking daughters Then I d die of thirst before you wall got back

They set off at a leisurely pace to accommodate Ez As Spartan walked through the sear fields the wind whipping his cheeks he felt again the exuberance of the morning For six hours now his nostrils had been free of clinic odor and classrooms reeking with the indefinable smell of bodies warmed by steam heat He wanted to go on like this forever his kill swinging from his shoulder and the anticipation of cool water to wet his throat He was rather tight elated, and only dimly aware of his condition

He clowned like a six year-old outdoing himself when Buddy and Ez doubled up at his efforts They drew close to the farmhouse and spied a man working a pump just inside a lean to The man s back was to them and he seemed as yet unaware of their approach Spartan flung himself to the ground and crawled after Ez with one claw raised Water he gasped in the name of Allah effendi water!

Ez leaned over and took his pulse 'Water he snapped to Buddy Boiling water and all the clean sheets you can find This woman is going to have a baby!"

Buddy joined in clumsily 'Doctor will she live? Doctor—— His voice rose shrilly

The man at the pump was observing them with a level stare

He tripped Ez said weakly helping Spartan to his feet. 'We wondered if you d let us have a glass of water

Glass huh The man spat and lifted a dipper from a hook He extended it to Spartan bowl forward and motioned to the bucket he had just filled Meeting the man s gaze Spartan saw that he was not as old as he had at first seemed Tobacco-stained stumps of teeth in his mouth turkey neck sagging spinal column—all denoted the decay of seventy but something in the flat blue stare denied it And the hair that grew low and unkempt over his forehead like a woods straggling down the brow of a hill was still a sandy red

'Huntin huh? he said to Buddy

Yeah

Spartan filled the dipper from the bucket and handed it to Ez Ez bowed After you Doctor

Spartan bowed and offered the dipper to Buddy After you sir" Buddy said deferentially

Again Spartan bowed and drank *Danke* he said Over the rim of the dipper he could see his host s eyes widen in interest.

You wall from Tenneville?

'Yeah" Buddy said with great reserve

The man returned to Spartan looking at him narrowly You re a furriner ain t ya? he said suddenly as though to catch Spartan off guard

They were delighted Ez offered with quiet respect He speaks mostly German

That so?

I speag English vluently Spartan corrected him with dignity

Buddy returned the dipper to Spartan Doctor would you like another drink?

Dank yew

The farmer exhibited a sly interest You a doctor huh?

Originally from Heidelberg but now connected with the University Ez said with proper awe

My old woman the man said tentatively has got more miseries than a dog s got fleas Allus complainin oncet she had a headache fer two weeks and can t nothing be done about it He continued to gaze at Spartan with innocent cunning Doc to town said nothin s wrong with her Doc Bronson that is over to Britt s Lick Smart feller that one He chuckled richly Tole her her headaches us all inner head She s in there got one now As though not quite daring to poke Spartan in the ribs he repeated Tole her her headaches us all inner head All inner—— He shuffled uncertainly She s in there now steada slopping the hogs I wuz wunnerin if you d kinda look at her Doc—uh——

McClintock! Buddy said respectfully Doctor McClintock Of Heidelberg

Doctor McClintock that is the farmer repeated Ain t no use tryin to take her inner town when nothin s wrong with her

Spartan remembered a tin of aspirin he had brought along for such dire illness as hangovers I vill give her wan little pill he said impressively And her headache poof! Like dot!

Well now I m sure beholden to yuh Doc—uh——

McClintock! Ez said loudly

They followed him into the house finding themselves in a large cluttered filthy room In the corner of the room under a mass of dirty quilts lay a woman twisting her head back and forth

Dicey I got the doctor from the University! the farmer cried triumphantly He s gunna fix it so you won t never have them head aches again

The woman turned her head towards Spartan her thin mouth pulled down in the sullen arc of the hypochondriac Ain t no doctor ever helped me yet! she whined defiantly

The farmer gloated as though at last he saw defeat for her in a weary argument they had been waging for years This one will This uns Doctor McClintock from the University!

Spartan avoided her glare and thrust the aspirin at her She reached out a claw with a long festering scratch on it and took the pill reluctantly She tried to swallow it grimmaced gagged and finally gulped it down Then flopping her head back on the greasy pillow twisting it back and forth she resumed Ain t gunna do no good No doctor ever helped me yet

Provoked with himself for allowing the horseplay to go this far Spartan signaled Buddy and Ez with his eyes as they warmed them selves at the fire They filed out hastily nodding and receiving the farmer s bubbling thanks

That was messy Spartan commented trudging across the fields "Forget it, Ez said Hey let s all have another drink!

XII

A week went by and it was as though Spartan had spent a long full life attending one class after another streaming along with a group of students through hospital wards watching demonstrations on this patient and that performing surgery on dogs and working in clinic where most of the filthier patients seemed to have some puru lent condition of their unspeakable feet and where no child was ever brought in for any reason including having its head inspected for lice who did not shriek howl bawl whine or bellow its agony to the world

His Thanksgiving holiday seemed years in the past

XIII

Dr Moonly lecturer in gynecology and obstetrics, had met his Nemesis in the form of his dentist Instead of teeth he carried about in his mouth two sliding slippery composition plates from which were suspended things which very much resembled white oblongs of candy-coated chewing gum He had long since discovered that the surest method or retaining the plates in his mouth was to place his hand to his lips and hold them there by force The position most comfortable for this eternal task was to lower his chin to his chest and cup a hand tenderly across his mouth The only sounds that ever escaped from the elderly physician were a few muffled words and a continual ck-ck-ck

On Friday afternoon a week after Thanksgiving Dr Moonly was valiantly engaged in battle with the word leukorrhea In the sixth row a drowsy Spartan McClintock sat by a hissing radiator and strove to keep awake His pen wavered and almost slipped from his fingers

He must have dozed for rousing himself to consciousness he saw that one of the secretaries from the front office had come into the lecture hall Dr Moonly had been weaving a fugue not around "leuk k k k but Mc-ck-ck-ck lin tk tk

Dean s office Mr McClintock " the secretary said relieving Dr Moonly of any further effort

Still groggy he gathered his books together As he went out the door he lifted his shoulders in a question and looked back at the curious Buddy in the second row It wouldn t be Imagene he assured himself as he hurried down to the first floor His mother? He had gotten a letter from her yesterday and she had seemed almost saucy in the description of her doings Accidents

He heard Dean Gus Meunch s roaring even through the heavy door as he came into the outer office Gus s secretary was frankly eavesdropping and when she saw Spartan she bent on him a look of avid curiosity mingled oddly with a trace of pity Oh Mr McClintock! Go—go right in!

Nevertheless he knocked first Here! Gus yelled while Barba rossa took up the invitation and repeated it at length

Spartan opened the door and looked in at Gus curiously "Yes Doctor? *he said coming forward* Then he saw that Gus had com

pany Two men dressed as backwoods versions of successful business men sat grimly to one side of Gus

On the other side twisting his hat and grinning amiably was the farmer who had given Spartan and his companions a drink of water on Thanksgiving Day

Howdy Doctor McClintock the farmer said cheerfully

Spartan looked at him briefly then away In this moment not yet knowing what it was he had to decide he recognized that his time of decision had come His love for Imagene his friendship with Buddy his indebtedness to Mr Boswell even his pity for the consumptive Ez resolved into one thought *All right not Buddy not E. but me alone Just me—alone*

The decision made he had only to abide by it.

2

OF THE two men in Gus s office other than the farmer the one now watched Spartan impassively while the other fixed on him greenish pig eyes bright with malice and some other private emotion This second man was slight his wiry little trunk seeming almost inadequate to its task of supporting his large head On this head was a kinky colorless mat that apparently had been sent out before *welcome* could be stamped on it The man s ears were set low giving the forehead a domed effect and his jaws moved jerkily the muscles flexing and unflexing in wormlike writhings under the skin of his cheeks At first it seemed that he was chewing gum possibly a quid and then as he spoke it was obvious that his mouth was empty he was eating rather the lining of his mouth So you re *Doctor* Mc Clintock huh? And where are your other two *doctor* friends? His sneering intonation the very way he swung the leg crossed on its mate back and forth at once antagonized Spartan The man was a swaggerer a banty-cock convinced that the miniature barnyard he ruled was the world I m LeRoy Johnson he continued as though this were a fact to strike terror into Spartan s heart Reckon you ve heard of me?

Never Spartan blurted out contemptuously

Please, just a moment gentlemen Gus said anxiously Spartan sit down We have with us here the county attorney from Kennassee County and his deputy

I m the sheriff the laconic one corrected evenly and resumed his emotionless contemplation of Spartan

It wasn t a mere violation of the game regulations a misdemeanor such as that would not require No something else Spartan sat down still glaring at LeRoy Johnson the county attorney

And the other gentleman—— Gus began as though determined to put the matter on a social level

I m Lafe Bailey The farmer rose hand extended to Spartan and was arrogantly ordered to sit down by the county attorney

You want to talk to me about something?" Spartan suggested in a level enough tone

'Talk to you! The worms in LeRoy Johnson s cheeks writhed *Doctor* McClintock I m here to arrest you!

Now sir Gus roared suddenly we must not talk hasty Arrest! It was an accident. Accident! McClintock is one of our best men The best! He was talking so fast that his words were a series of outraged growls and roars We cannot take the word of a—a——" His thickening accent threatened to render him unintelligible

Spartan held himself erect recognizing that the spew of acid into his throat foreran panic Lafe Bailey s wife? But it was not the aspirin it could not possibly have done her harm And he never carried any other drug however innocuous about on his person

Accident " County Attorney Johnson sneered He stood up posturing and shook his finger in Spartan s face The greenish eyes danced with excitement Accident *Doctor* McClintock? I call it murder!"

Oh my God Spartan thought astonished to the point of disbelief Lafe Bailey must have killed his wife and blamed it on us

With squat head jutted forward Gus was bellowing "I vill not——

And I reckon you will! You and the whole University are caught over the barrel this time This smarty little doctor here and his pals went and got too big for their own britches Maybe you put up with their going around killing people in Tennassa County maybe you university folks think you own the world Well lemme tell you you don t own Kennassee County!

And when a bunch of trash like this guy here and his pals comes over and kills—kills!—one of our folks we aim to do something about it! The mouth chewing became lacerating "So all we want outa you *Doctor* McClintock is the names of the two of them with you and then alla us is going for a nice little ride back to Kennassee County!

You are inzane! Gus screamed. "This man is—Spartan will tell us the truth about this——

"He'll tell it in court that s where Not that it'll do them any "

Lafe Bailey was looking from Gus to LeRoy Johnson absorbed

as a child privileged to witness an adult quarrel Quite inarguably Spartan s mind said He didn t kill her—Lafe Bailey did not kill his wife He flung himself out of his chair and thrust his face into that of the county attorney What did that woman die of?

You don t know *Doctor?* the chewing mouth sneered Reckon you wall had more to learn than you thought

What did she die of? Spartan demanded vehemently He waited a moment and then recklessly gathered the county attorney to him by the tie Immediately the somnolent sheriff livened and jumped up

Lockjaw! County Attorney LeRoy Johnson cried He straightened his tie and chewed furiously Lockjaw Doctor McClintock because you told her not to go to a doctor You wall told her she d be fine didn t you? Up and around cooking supper in an hour Didn t you *Doctor?*

She allus was poorly, Lafe Bailey put in informatively to Gus

Nough outa you LeRoy Johnson snapped

I told her no such thing! Spartan raged I gave her an aspirin I didn t examine her I didn t touch her and I told her nothing!

Reckon you got witnesses for that? LeRoy Johnson said slyly

You bet —— He saw the greenish glint of ambition in LeRoy Johnson s eyes—why was he so sure it was that?—saw the sheriff rise lazily and take a pair of steel cuffs from his pocket, saw Lafe Bailey s grinning delight at the excitement of the situation saw Gus s face looking up at him ugly as impending disaster what was that decision he had made? Surely it had had nothing to do with murder?

The payment on his debt to the Boswells had come due But I can t remember their names he heard himself saying flatly to LeRoy Johnson

You d know them if you saw them though? Well?

Spartan shrugged and held his hands out to the sheriff Mr Johnson they were a couple of undergrads If you had them right here in the room I wouldn t know them from Adam

You can t get away with that I ll get their names out of you if I have to——

Spartan looked him full in the face and smiled I was too drunk to remember

The sheriff squinted at him Lissen son maybe you don t know

what s about. You re going up before the grand jury in the morning Better name them others We aim to find them anyway

'Name them LeRoy Johnson said with a soft cunning voice or we ll use them against you when we do find them Take your choice

"One was sorta peaked like Lafe Bailey offered. "I remember that un

Spartan continued to smile wearing his fear with all the verve of courage When you re ready to go I am

"Why we re ready right now the sheriff said easily 'But to make it all legal and all I ll show you the warrant first. Here tis A warrant for the arrest of Spartan McClintock issued in this county Signed by Judge Peters see right there on the bottoma the page

Gus began McClintock I beg of you not to be a fool It is that peasant—that——"

Spartan managed a ghastly grin and interrupted hastily Changed your mind Sheriff?

"Funny aren t you? Johnson snapped "You ll be laughing out of the other side of your mouth smart aleck

Loathing him Spartan jeered at LeRoy Johnson silently You re bluffing Johnson, and we both know it. You haven t got a chance!

Spartan walked out of the building between the sheriff and the county attorney Behind them trotted Lafe Bailey happily gaping at the quad and the Gothic world in which he found himself

In late afternoon they arrived in Britt s Lick, a dismal mountain town and the county seat of Kennassee County There Spartan spent his first night in jail

ii

The community of Britt s Lick insular and benighted was agog with excitement. The citizenry stormed the room where the grand jury sat they stood on wagons outside the building and leaned in the opened windows so piled on one another that they were as effective as windows for keeping out the cold

In their midst Spartan sat listening to the coroner describing in graphic terms the death agonies of a victim of tetanus He spoke of

the convulsions of the unbearable pain of *trismus*—the jaws locked molar grinding on molar of *risus sardonicus*—the spasm of the facial muscles that pulls the eyebrows up to the hairline and curves the mouth into a grin of welcome for oncoming death And Spartan listened and thought But when I saw her the symptoms had not presented themselves yet I couldn t have known *The festering scratch on her hand* Always he returned to that

At the hearing s end he was indicted for first-degree murder

Manacled he was led through the crowd to the jail across the street At the door of the jail house Spartan waited Already he had learned of the old world courtesy with which officers are wont to treat their charges The sheriff bounded forward to open the door for Spartan and then after he had passed through to close it behind him pulling the door to as quietly as if Spartan were some honored guest

I ll be taking off your cuffs now the sheriff said searching through the pockets of his faded breeches for the key Spartan held out his wrists and rubbed them when he was freed For a moment his eyes met those of the sheriff, but no message passed between them

Spartan stepped into the cell and stood while the barred door clanged to creakily He did not move until after the sheriff had gone back to his office and closed the door He was the only occupant of the jail and in the silence he again began to try himself accusing and defending going over and over the events of Thanksgiving afternoon

After minutes or hours he shouted suddenly three or four loud yellings in succession The echoes died slowly No one came, no one answered The world outside was dead In this dark little hole where they had shut him up he began to feel unreal He had lost his sense of time with nothing outside of himself to relate it to time congealed

Feel better?" he heard the sheriff say and he raised his head from his hands Lots of em like to yell at first The sheriff was balancing a tray with one hand and opening the door with the other There was a Mason jar o what appeared to be bean soup a mug of coffee and three biscuits

Depositing the t ay on the bunk the sheriff returned to the door and leaned against it looking at Spartan thoughtfully Lemme give you a little advice son Don t go around rilin LeRoy no more n you

have to He s out there right now running around the courthouse like a crazy man LeRoy can hang you if he s amind to Better off if fen you play up to him

Spartan thought of the cocky county attorney with his shrill excited woman s voice his small green eyes darting from one member of the grand jury to the next seeking constantly constantly constantly to have everyone watching and admiring LeRoy Johnson

I don t have to play up to him Spartan blurted angrily I m

The sheriff waited patiently for him to continue Yuh?

I m innocent Spartan said thus suddenly concluding his private trial of himself

Suits me the sheriff said pleasantly Anyways after you ve eat your dinner there s a lawyer from Tenneville to see you And some Jew feller Wanna talk to them?

You re damn right I do!

A man who would have been substantial and of importance even had he been born a Chinese coolie came through the door of the cell block Behind him was Milt Salpinger his eyes involuntarily darting into the darkness of the other cells

I m Breckinridge Fane the lawyer said He extended a muscular hand to Spartan placed his generous bottom on the bunk and opened his brief case His gray hair shone thick and silvery in the dim light from the window and in the cell it was impossible to detect a single line on his ruddy face The University sent me over here to straighten this—contretemps out

It s a helluva mess if you ask me Milt put in And you re not helping yourself any Fartin

I ll—talk for a moment if you don t mind Breckinridge Fane said He looked up at Spartan leaning against the wall and then once quickly as though in warning to Milt

O K Milt said But you don t know him like I do He went out of the opened door and back into the sheriff's office

Fane smiled and a faint gust of air came out from his depths The world s politest belch Spartan thought Well McClintock looks like your friend doesn t give you credit for having much common sense

Spartan shrugged.

"Now then" Fane continued assuming a cozy chatty tone 'we both know don t we that this is not the time to be quixotic I'll be frank with you Steven the——

Spartan

Oh Spartan The—uh—oh yes situation is bad The local county attorney is a——

Look Mr Fane Spartan broke in irritably why is everybody so excited about that guy? What difference does it make? All I did was give a woman an aspirin No matter what this LeRoy John——

I suggest Fane said acidly that you make that your last silly interruption I will interpret the law all that is required of you is complete reliance and co-operation As I was saying the local county attorney is a firebrand with political aspirations He s going to make a Roman holiday out of the trial in order to boost his reputation with the——

Trial! You don t mean they re intending to try me for murder?

For what other reason do you think you re being held?

Until a lawyer came and got me out Spartan said with the lay man s unerring ability to get straight to the point of a legal matter

Breckinridge Fane merely observed him with pity It is going to come as a blow to you when you finally realize your great danger Perhaps you can understand this When one person endeavors to aid another in distress it is his duty not to leave the helpless one in greater peril than he was before Maybe that will clear up the situation a little for you Oh yes indeed you re going to trial

Spartan wondered if Fane realized that he was talking gibberish

to keep the trial from taking place in Kennassee County Fane was saying First thing Monday I m motioning for a change of venue You won t be present that s a procedural matter He lifted a legal size pad from his brief case and uncapped his pen 'The body is being exhumed of course I ve already got the order for that

Ah yes—now Let s see you and a William Boswell and an Ezra Conklin set out together on a hunting——

"No Spartan said

What?

They weren t the ones

Well now not only Doctor Meunch but your Mr Salpinger both assured me that they were quite sure of the names

And I assure you they re both wrong

"I see" Fane peered at Spartan thoughtfully and then looked down at his fountain pen with equal concentration Look here son if you refuse to name your two companions—either so they can be tried with you—or so they can give evidence in your behalf—I say this in all seriousness—you will be convicted of a very serious crime"

What crime? Spartan said 'I haven t committed any!

Fane sighed in exasperation And how are you going to prove that?

Lawyers apparently couldn t see the woods for the trees Why I can say I didn t

Your testimony alone Fane said sarcastically Just the defend ant up on the stand giving his own version of what happened Do you know what LeRoy Johnson will make of that? He ll have the jury convinced that you re afraid to have the other two come forward with the truth

It would be my word against Lafe Bailey s" Spartan said mul ishly

Fane s ruddy face was now white with anger Very well he said coldly *Suppose you tell me the story you intend to tell the jury*

The truth Spartan said trying not to become angry himself is this We—two undergrads and myself I don t remember who they were—went hunting

That Fane thought the story infantile was obvious By the time he had finished Spartan had turned sullen " that s all."

Fane said Indeed it is If I weren t a personal friend of Dean Meunch s I d drop this case here and now Must I point out to you that the reputation of the entire medical school is at stake as well as your freedom?

'Then it s a good thing Spartan said smartly that only one medical student is involved

You fool" Fane said "you pigheaded fool Unless you admit to LeRoy Johnson that those other two were with you so he can have warrants out to find and arrest them—you re sunk. You re as good as on your way to prison right now

Find Then they were both gone If they were that rattled that afraid he was better off without them He could fight better alone and unimpeded Even if he lost and had to go to prison for a year—he d still be just another year behind in school And Gus would take

him back no one would blame you for manslaughter, it was unin tentional like an accident

He said politely I m sorry Mr Fane but I don t remember who the others were

Fane put his legal pad away in the brief case and snapped the lock Frankly I don t care to be around to see what s going to happen to you If it weren t for Gus Meunch believe me I wouldn t be Good day Mr McClintock

'Thank you for com—— Spartan began but Fane had stalked out

Milt came in warily measuring Spartan as though he were an opponent Then he sat where Fane s imprint still dented the rough blanket of the bunk Spartan tucked his arms across his chest and defiantly stared Milt down

O K Fartin Milt said coldly Let s ring down the curtain on your act It s impressed Fane all to hell and Gus and everybody else including that bastard LeRoy Johnson We all think you re too noble or stupid for words whatever it is you re trying to prove

If you want to do something for me Spartan said 'wire my mother to come up here She may have to find me another lawyer And save the lecture I ll have enough of them when I get back to Tenneville

Milt laughed He sat looking at Spartan leaning against the wall and he laughed as he might at a cripple trying to make his living as a clown Oh my God Hamlet! Or is it Sydney Carton? Abruptly he was serious again I ve already wired your mother she s on her way up here with the Boswells At least *some* of the Boswells

Spartan waited

I m afraid that Buddy Milt said slowly will be conspicuous by his absence I don t know where they ve got him hiding out

'Then you wouldn t know where Ez is either Spartan prodded

You know goddamn well I know where Ez is When that skunk Buddy lit out I hid Ez over at Militant Mac s until my dad came for him there But Ez is ready to come forward any time he s needed I don t know why I have to tell you that you should know But Boswell has got to be found

Why? Spartan asked sharply

Milt sighed and took out a pack of cigarettes Not offering Spartan

one he stuck a cigarette in his mouth and let it dangle there unlit. "Listen Fartin you ve got to have someone to corroborate your testimony So here s the way we ll work it You keep mum on Ez and you and Boswell back each other up and fight it out together I ll go have the sheriff send our Little LeRoy in and you give him the story

Very quietly Spartan said You drag Buddy in on this Milt and I promise you we ll pin it on Ez together Is *that* clear? Buddy will swear to anything I tell him you know that Get it straight Milt! I want to keep both of them out of it But if you force me to I'll lie like hell to save Buddy s skin at the expense of Ez s

Why you arrogant ass Milt said You paranoid little Jesus you You d do it wouldn t you? You d throw away your medical career and Ez s life for that family You re not being noble to protect two other guys you re doing it because one of them *happens* to be named Boswell Just because the old man gave you some money just because you re engaged to Imagene Boswell You re going to ruin your life you re going to give up your chance to be one of the *slickest doctors sweet Jesus ever made—just because of* some dough and a flapper who can t keep her pants on!

In the quiet of the cell Spartan enunciated every word deliberately Get out of here you goddamned kike

Without a word Milt walked out of the cell and stood looking at Spartan through the bars of the door He said finally O K Spart. It s your play party Good luck. And then he was gone

But in the next few days he had other visitors Three of the four Boswells came to see him as well as his mother and Fane The senior Boswells thought he was doing a very very sensible thing His mother and Imagene were not so sure—though for different reasons

Imagene even came alone late one afternoon to express her views The sheriff leering a bit permitted the inverview to take place in his office then hiding behind a newspaper he tactfully listened in.

Imagene was confused furious and eloquent. Solely for his own benefit she berated Spartan and called him a damned fool for protecting Buddy She went on and on and finally because she was excited and tired and even, perhaps because she was a bit sorry for Spartan finally she wept.

He patted her hands and her shoulders he pulled her to him and

kissed her he muttered that it would be all right all right but he knew she didn t believe him for he was beginning to doubt it himself

The interview ended and she went away dabbing at the mascara streaks on her cheeks with her handkerchief The sheriff let Spartan back into his cell and commented, Bad, son Purty bad

Go to hell Spartan said wretchedly

The sheriff chuckled disappeared and returned bearing a rickety chair He seated himself and then rocked back against the wall Since everybody else s been trying to set you straight I m going to have a try at it boy From makin s he rolled himself a cigarette that looked like a wrapped taffy kiss lit it and with sparks dropping on his chest, started to talk

Why is it Spartan thought resentfully that they all smoke and never think to offer me one?

Now you take LeRoy the sheriff said without preamble He s nobody to cross son Meaner than a rattlesnake when he gets goin' Right now he s goin He hates Tenneville and he hates that university Like to see everybody in it dead The sheriff chuckled And that includes all them purty girls goin there too

Spartan said ungraciously, Why tell me? Besides he went there to law school didn t he?

Nope LeRoy read law right here in Britt s Lick In Judge Britt s office Him and the judge—the judge just thinks the sun rises and sets in that LeRoy Says the University is gunna be mighty sorry someday LeRoy didn t go there

'Didn t. Only the judge shoulda said couldn't They wouldn t have him on account of grades or something LeRoy don t know I know a thing about it but as sheriff of this county I learn about all there is to know And I ve knowed LeRoy since he was a lot younger than you How old you anyway son?

'Twenty four "

"Hmmm. You act a little younger somehow Anyways that might be one reason why LeRoy hates Tenneville people so But my point is this When a rattlesnake s after you the thing to do is run not stop and fight it with your bare hands Maybe I m violating my duty telling you all this but I dunno I just want you to know a little something about our boy LeRoy

Ever since he was a little kid he always went around telling peo-

ple how big he was going to be when he grew up If onena the other kids said he was going to be a lawyer then LeRoy right away was going to be county attorney—like he is now And if they said they was going to be mayor of Tenneville then LeRoy was going to be governor of the state Got more ambition than a tomcat with pepper on its pecker

"He sounds like an overeducated moron to me Spartan put in haughtily

'That he ain t, whatever it is They s a lot he s got to learn yet, and a lot he knows Both ways. But here s what I m trying to tell you LeRoy s been county attorney for almost ten years now And notta blame thing s happened he could get his teeth into til now 'Til you come along and drop right into LeRoy s lap Just you—all ready to bluff it out alone

The sheriff stood up and lifted his chair back out into the hall. He seemed almost through with his advice One more thing Le-Roy's been hankering for a long time now to be state s attorney He s figuring your trial will give him that chance"

The cell door slammed behind the sheriff and he stood looking in at Spartan 'That is if he can hog tie you in fronta that jury and hold you tight.

He'll have a hard time doing it Spartan thought angrily The strutting mouthing little egomaniac!

Breckinridge Fane was embittered He wanted someone to arrest the Boswells and force them to reveal Buddy s whereabouts LeRoy hadn t the proper authority to and no one else was interested Breckinridge couldn t see this noble shilly-shallying about when a murder trial was pending This wasn t a matter of who hit teacher in the face with a spitball he asserted Moreover he couldn t even get his hands on Ez Conklin because Milt had refused to produce him unless Buddy Boswell came in also Fane was disgusted and he said so to Spartan, along with all the rest, daily Furthermore he hadn t managed to get the venue changed, and in retaliation for his efforts LeRoy had had Judge Britt set the trial for the week before Christmas In Fane s opinion the best thing for him to do was to start working on a governor s pardon. He wasn t being entirely facetious when he said it.

As for wild horses and pigheads Fane ranted not all the former in the world could force Spartan McClintock, the latter, to change his mind.

iii

On Monday December 19 1927 at eight in the morning carnival fiesta and pandemonium began their triumvirate in the mountain town of Britt s Lick Wagons had rolled down from the hills along frozen rutted roads since before dawn the Traveler's Hotel dining room was a rackety food factory from six in the morning on adolescents and gamins shouted and stamped their cold feet and lined the street as though waiting for the circus parade to begin the colored folk mingled quite boldly with the whites in the crowd everyone too excited to mind from nowhere there had sprung up around the courthouse portable hot-dog and soft-drink stands and reporters from Tenneville and even one from Louisville tumbled in and out the Traveler s doors and ogled the mountain lasses

And through all this gaiety walked Spartan McClintock on his way across the street to the courthouse His hands were manacled in front of him

But he stumbled only when in the still empty courtroom he saw the Boswells his mother and Imagene awaiting him The sheriff's hand on his elbow steadied him and he was pushed into a chair at one end of a long table Uncuffed he stirred about to smile encouragement at the little group clustered in the first row of the spectators section, and to observe the room in general In front was a vacant massive bench flanked on one side by Old Glory and on the other by a spittoon Well within sharp-shooter range of the spittoon was another high backed chair such as the one he sat in To the far side of the chair ranged what was surely the jury box and of those gentlemen the phenomenal in aim volume and projective force was required The liquid in the golden bowl was as yet unsullied appearing to be only water

Breckinridge Fane came in arguing with LeRoy They seemed to be enjoying themselves immensely and parted reluctantly Fane to seat himself beside Spartan Well he began have you reconsidered——

There was a sudden thunder as the spectators were admitted They surged *and pounded in holding their lunches wrapped in newspapers*

and greasy sheets of butcher s paper above their heads They hurled themselves at Spartan trying to climb over the bar busying the cursing sheriff with their efforts Within the bar the reporters clustered at the foot of the bench like court jesters and took pictures of Spartan, the Boswells Fane LeRoy and the crowd at large

Fane was displaying a fine indignation 'This is an outrage! he cried to Spartan It s LeRoy s doing all right He exhibited his flaring nostrils glaring I warned you he was going to make political hay out of this trial!"

The doors at the back were slowly being closed by three struggling deputy sheriffs and arms and legs still protruded through them which had to be kicked or shoved out before the doors could meet A cry of triumph from the spectators rolled out to taunt the answering cries of those who were being shut outside

A seedy little man darted out of a door to the left of the bench and took a stance at the corner of the counsel table nearest LeRoy

Everbuddy rise!

Judge Britt appeared in robes as ancient and dusty as himself Spartan watched this venerable personage intently The judge could easily have been ninety his sparse hair drifted about the peak of his skull like wisps of cirrus clouds, his hands shook continuously and the fingers rolled invisible pills the thin remnant of his mouth occasionally losing a drop like a worn-out faucet moved in a perpetual tremble With the clerk s aid he ascended unsteadily to the bench and cautiously pleated himself into his chair

Judge Britt appeared at last to recognize that there was a waiting courtroom before him Mr Johnson? he asked in a reedy voice

LeRoy hopped up his mouth chewing furiously 'The state is ready Your Honor he bawled pompously

Mr Fane?

Fane rose politely and murmured Defendant ready Your Honor

Mr Clerk the judge piped 'you will admit twelve veniremen to the box

Twelve farmers and mountaineers came clumping into the box Seated they grinned to a man and peeped out at the spectators Their they looked at Spartan, bending on him one gaze implacable hostile and avid Premonition stirred within him restlessly

LeRoy was again jumping to his feet eyes glinting over at Fane as

he bellowed Your Honor without having to ask one question of these upright citizens the state is satisfied with the jury as it stands! In fact the state would be satisfied with any or all citizens of our fine outstanding county and these twelve gentlemen here represent the——'

Fane snapped to his feet Mr Johnson I must interrupt you Are you summing up by any chance?

LeRoy waxed complacent The panel is yours, Mr Fane" he said while the jury beamed

LeRoy was not quite right in that Two hours later Fane was still hammering at the fine citizens of the county It looked for a while as though LeRoy might get his wish in one detail though as another citizen entered the box to replace the one Fane had successfully chal lenged himself to be replaced by another it appeared that every male in Kennassee County might sooner or later have his turn

Fane could not reconcile himself to stupidity When once he asked a prospective juror I suppose you still believe that old saying that a man is innocent until he is proved guilty? and the indignant reply came I shore do not! he released the man with a voice of contempt It came to Spartan slowly that Fane wanted the twelve quickest minds in Kennassee County those minds which could discern in some measure when their logic was being tampered with and when traps were being laid for them

Fane got the twelve best minds in Kennassee County They were not very good though They were shop worn minds fingered too many times by poverty and hardship so that education had never cared to buy them

Still Spartan relaxed somewhat from his rigidity and thought Fane knows what he s doing this mess will come out all right Somehow He regretted that it was necessary for him to antagonize Fane when it came to Ez and Buddy Boswell

The jury chosen they sat beaming at Fane For this once they were his jury he had pinned the blue ribbon on each swelling breast

Even better it was now time for lunch

LeRoy was to open the afternoon session with his address to the jury At the counsel table he studied some notes for a moment cluck ing to himself then rose and strutted to the jury box He bent on each of the twelve men in turn a stern and sorrowful gaze Your Honor

and gentlemen of the jury It is my sad duty to bring before you facts so horrible so—so—shocking that I shrink from my task
Shrinking or not LeRoy continued in the same flowery vein for some time arriving finally at the disputed matters of Thanksgiving after noon

Up to this point, LeRoy had bored his jury but now his rising voice tugged at them and they sat up obediently alert "Three men came walking up to Lafe s house That one —he whirled and pointed to Spartan— and two others They said they wanted a drink of water Lafe told them he was in a hurry that he was going to get the doctor for his wife with lockjaw Then this one"—again he pointed to Spartan— this one Spartan McClintock stood up and said he was a doctor!

LeRoy s voice now hovered on a semishriek 'He said he was a famous doctor from the University of Tenneville and that he could cure Dicey Bailey with one little pill He got Lafe to let him give that poor dying woman the pill that sent her to her death as sure as if it was poison! That s what he did' He

"Poppycock " Fane murmured disdainfully even as LeRoy went on to enlarge on the theme In time he returned to Spartan "But this Spartan McClintock is no doctor at all He s just a little smarty pants stoodent and I m here to serve notice we don t want his kind coming over here no more! If they want to do any killing, lettem do it somewhere else

All of LeRoy s assumed suavity for Fane s sake was gone Now he was talking to the jury in the language that was his as well as theirs

you hear how Dicey Bailey a human woman suffered and strangled and had fits and locked her jaws till you couldn t slip a knife blade between her teeth—all because of this Spartan McClintock—your blood s a going to boil' And then laffing to himself he went out and left that pore woman to die in agony

Oh I know all about what his lawyer s going to tell you That it was all just a mistake that this *pore* boy over there didn t know what he was doing, that he didn t even know Dicey Bailey was real sick

As the afternoon sun came full into the courtroom LeRoy grew hoarse and had to take frequent drinks of water to cool his throat For the more intelligent of the jury he explained the basis on which the state laid its charge against Spartan McClintock. It was a felony

in Kennassee to practice medicine without a license And any homicide that occurred during or as the result of the perpetration of a felony was first-degree murder No excuse that a homicide was not intended would exonerate the perpetrator his malicious intent to commit a felony would be imputed over to the act that led to homicide

LeRoy said this quite precisely gauging with his intense gaze the amount of comprehension each member of the jury exhibited When they sat frowning in stultified concentration he dropped the legal aspects of the case and returned to his former oratory

At four thirty when the courtroom lights were turned on LeRoy was in the home stretch Voice now a soft rasp he said quietly but forcefully I m not asking you to bring in a guilty verdict—I m *telling* you to And when you hear the testimony of the coroner and pore broken hearted Lafe Bailey—you ll know why!

LeRoy made a leg held the pose for an instant and then sat down.

One of the jurors started to clap ceased in embarrased confusion and took to glaring at his neighbor A reporter snickered

'This court shall be recessed until eight o clock tomorrow morning Judge Britt said cramming a yawn back into his mouth

In the sheriff's office that evening Spartan said Mr Fane I m not going to change my mind I m sorry sir But that LeRoy Johnson can t prove a word he said today so I can t see why we need Buddy or Ez to disprove him "

Fane merely looked at him

In the morning LeRoy s first witness a wagging jowled gentleman took the stand His expression was angry and lugubrious both as though he had just left the lately discovered shallow grave of a slain child His name he said was Elder Bronson M D he was the coroner and he had also signed the death certificate of Dicey Bailey who died of tetanus on November 30

You were the physician in attendance to Dicey Bailey at the time of her illness? LeRoy asked

Dr Bronson looked directly at Spartan. You might say I was *one* of them

Fane objected promptly and was as promptly overruled. LeRoy smirked at the judge before applying himself again to his witness

With woeful mein Dr Bronson took up his tale Lafe Bailey he said had come for him early in the morning on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving. From Lafe s description of his wife s symptons Dr Bronson feared she was suffering from tetanus Upon his arrival at the farmhouse he gave Dicey Bailey a T A T shot at once 'Tee-ay tee' that s tetanus anti-tetanus I gave her the shot intravenously—that s right in the vein, you see——" Dr Bronson had shifted in his chair so that he was full face to the jury as he lectured to them " in the vein like I said And right after that she had another convulsion, a terrible one I had to have Lafe sit on her knees and hold her down and I put a tongue depressor between her teeth—that s one of those skinny little sticks—and her jaws was so locked I almost couldn t get it in. I held her tongue down with it to keep her from swallering it."

'Then what, if anything did you do?

"Well nothing much I could do Couldn t move her of course Her skin was all blistered probably from the fever, but she couldn't even be sponged off She was that sensitive Well anyway I come back to my office and I made out a report on Dicey and gave it to you Mr Johnson I have to make a report on all cases like that."

"Did you make another visit to the deceased?

"Yessir I did I came back early the next morning to give her an other T A T shot She died while I was still there went right off into a terrible convulsion and died just like that!

"And what made Dicey Bailey die right then the way she did?"

Strangulation, Mr County Attorney She was choking and gasping all through the convulsion but her jaws w-s locked so tight that she couldn t get enough air Of course it was the lockjaw that was the real cause

LeRoy stood sunk in thought, as if unable to rid his mind of the grisly details of Dicey Bailey s death Then to make sure that the jury was sufficiently inflamed he had Dr Bronson go over the whole scene again

Fane interrupted, was squelched repeatedly and finally relapsed into a scowl

At last LeRoy turned Dr Bronson over to Fane "Your witness" he said in a tone that denied that Dr Bronson was any such thing

Fane did not stand up but read from the notes he had taken during the direct examination Yo stated that you are a physician and

that you are a graduate of the Memorial Medical School, a school no longer in existence

That is correct Dr Bronson snapped militarily

That was a two year medical college was it not? A homeopathic college?

What if it was? Look here Mr Fane I ve got as good a medical degree as any other doctor in this state my medical knowledge——"

I m sure that it is " Fane said pleasantly "Now Doctor at the time of your first examination of Mrs Bailey did you notice any *wound or something of the sort which might have been the original* source of the tetanus infection?"

Why yes There was this long jagged gash on her right arm. Lafe said she d done it about a week before in the barn Maybe a little less Maybe a little longer On a Monday or Tuesday maybe "

Did that seem reasonable to you?"

Yes it did I would say that the wound was about a week old Lafe said he knew it wasn t Sunday because the horses were in the barn then and she wouldn t go in when they were there

What? Fane said irritably as though this were too garbled for him to follow

I said that Lafe was telling me it wasn t Sunday because Dicey didn t like to be near the horses Dr Bronson ceased and looked down with open amusement at the frowning Fane

LeRoy grinned at the jury and shook his head slightly in the direction of Fane If Mr Fane wants that stricken he said enjoying the moment of condescension I will not contest the point.

I don t want anything stricken Fane said quickly I just want to be sure what the horses have to do with this My question was for the purposes of determining the day of infection and I fail to see that the barn——

Because Dr Bronson interrupted boldly impatient with such obtuseness what I was saying does fix the date

Fane continued to frown How so?

Because Dicey didn t go into the barn on Sunday The horses was in there then and she didn t like to be around horses I know for a fact that she complained that they made her sneeze and all So——"

So you re assuming that she did not receive the scratch on her hand that Sunday?

Dr Bronson shrugged 'That s all I said I didn t say was or

wasn t so I was just saying it wasn t likely she was in the barn when the horses were That s all

'Then you are unable to fix the date of infection positively?"

"That s right. But from the looks of the wound, it wasn t more n a week old when I saw it.

Which would place the day of infection on or about Monday the twenty first?"

About that. Or the day after "

"And after a person has been infected with lockjaw how long does it take usually for them to show the symptoms of lockjaw?"

Well that could be anywheres from two days to—say—over a month All depends But the average is about five or ten days after they ve been wounded or cut, or whatever

Fane asked pleasantly "Then if Dicey Bailey received the scratch on her hand even as early as Monday she would not be showing symptoms of lockjaw just three days later on Thanksgiving Day would she?"

Equally pleasant Dr Bronson replied Oh if the infection was a bad one she could show it easy in that time

You mean she could have been having convulsions?

Well. Not that soon probably Not convulsions But——"

You ve answered my question thank you Fane cut in 'Now you were not called in to look at Dicey Bailey until the following Tuesday Five days after you say she could probably have been showing that she had lockjaw?"

Dr Bronson grew wary "Well maybe only a doctor would have recognized it

To summarize On Thanksgiving Day Dicey Bailey would not as yet have been subject to convulsions and the symptoms of lockjaw would only have been apparent to a doctor Is that correct?"

I *said* Maybe Just *maybe* Don t you go *putting* words into my mouth sir

Fane waited politely until Dr Bronson had raised and lowered his brows significantly for the jury 'Now to return to the Tuesday after Thanksgiving the day you first went out to see Dicey Bailey You said you took the tetanus anti tetanus serum out with you?"

I did From what Lafe said I figured she had lockjaw all right.

And you gave her this serum as soon as you arrived?"

"Course not! I examined her completely first "

'At any time during your examination, did Dicey Bailey convulse or have any kind of a seizure?

Not right then no But she had a terrible terrible——

We ll get to that, Doctor After you made your diagnosis you then gave Dicey Bailey an injection of tetanus anti tetanus this serum you brought out with you?

'I certainly did! There wasn t a moment to waste in her cond——"

Horse serum? Fane said softly

Why, certainly Dr Bronson looked contemptuous 'That s how they make these shots they make them from horse s blood They——

Fane was leaning back in his chair easily his posture encouraging Dr Bronson to continue his lecture in immunology 'They use this serum from horses and inject it into people and it saves their lives If they get it in time he threw in with a sudden burst of malice

Is horse serum the only kind of T A T serum? I mean don t they make these shots out of some other kind of animal blood too?

Oh they make it out of cow serum too Bovine serum they call it

And did you bring bovine serum with you also?

No Most doctors use the horse serum

Except where the horse serum might make the patient even sicker than the disease they had isn t that right? Fane asked gently

I can tell you Dicey Bailey died of lockjaw if that s what you re trying to find out!

Strike that Fane said directly to the clerk Doctor Bronson you are here to answer questions as they are put to you If you don t understand the question I will be happy to repeat it But please don t blurt out the first thing that comes to you

There was an appreciative snort from the back of the jury box just as LeRoy stormed to his feet See here Counsel badgering and defaming a witness doesn t go in this county If you want to carry on like that do it in Tenneville We re after justice here not a lot of name-calling of one of the finest men ever to——

My apologies Doctor Bronson Fane cut in urbanely Shall we continue? *You injected horse serum into Mrs Bailey s vein?*

Yes of course I did

And immediately thereafter she had a convulsion?

Well she had a convulsion pretty soon after that One of them "

'She had one before you gave her the shot?

Not while I was there no She had——

I thought we d covered that, Doctor Bronson The only convul sion you know about is the one she had right after you gave her her shot! Isn t that what you said?

Yes

"You said in your direct testimony that Mrs Bailey was wheezing I believe you called it 'fighting for breath'?

Yes

And then she had another convulsion immediately after that?"

"Pretty soon after Once lockjaw starts a person to convul——"

You ve answered the question Doctor Also you mentioned that her skin was blistered?

Not exactly It looked like a fever rash to me People break out in little white bumps sometimes when they re feverish

You noticed this after you d given her the shot

Well I m not sure about that Could have been before or after "

Let me put a hypothetical question to you Doctor That is I ll pretend I m telling you about something that really happened, and then ask you to tell me what you think about it as a doctor Suppose a person who was allergic to horses—that is horses made them sneeze—had an amount of horse serum—let s say the amount of T A T horse serum you gave to Dicey—injected into his vein What would you say would be the result if any of such an injection?

Dr Bronson opened his mouth made a peculiar sound and closed it again He looked down pleadingly at LeRoy who gazed back un comprehending.

"Doctor Bronson did you understand the question?" Fane said silkily

"No

Very well, I shall be happy to clarify it Let us suppose that a patient who was allergic to horses—that is she sneezed when being near such animals—was given a large injection of horse serum An injection as large as the one you gave to Dicey Bailey What would be the result?

The witness became sullen His mouth moved and then in a burst of fury Dr Bronson shouted Well, if the patient had lockjaw and the serum was T.A T it might save her life—if she got it in time!"

Will you be so kind as to tell the jury what usually happens to a

person allergic to horses when they are given injections of horse serum? Fane repeated patiently

Dr Bronson licked his lips Sometimes you may get an atopic serum reaction he started rapidly "There could be a pretty general urticaria that is allergic wheals in the dermis This isn t the same as giant urticaria—that s hives He subsided completely

Fane nodded pleasantly "Would you say a horse allergic person receiving horse serum would also go into severe convulsions?

Dr Bronson balked No I wouldn t Then reversing himself he added as though casually mentioning some improbability such as a volcano erupting into existence right at his feet, Except rarely They just might but that s all

'This person receiving horse serum might also die from the shock of receiving the serum?

I suppose it could happen.

It could even have happened to Dicey Bailey couldn t it, Doctor?

Dr Bronson decided it was high time he took refuge in erudition Sir what you re saying has nothing to do with tetanus—*Clostridium tetani* This toxin travels along the trunk of the motor nerves then it becomes fixed by the—uh—gray matter of the C N S —the central nervous sysem—I mean like the spinal cord and brain—and then you—ah——

Fane waited politely for Dr Bronson to continue When no more was forthcoming he asked And how would you say the convulsions of tetanus are different from those caused by allergic shock?

Why what causes them! Dr Bronson said triumphantly

'Then Doctor it is possible that Dicey Bailey s convulsion imme diately after receiving the first injection of horse serum was due to the serum?

Well you keep forgetting that she had tet——

Will you answer my question! Fane cut in loudly

Yes it might have then! But she was so sensitive that anything——

Now as I recollect Doctor you attended Dicey Bailey on Wednesday morning also at which time you gave her a second injection Is that corrtct?

Yes

And again she immediately began to convulse?

"Well she did But she d been doing that all——"

She died no later than one half hour after receiving her second shot of horse serum?"

"Oh several minutes give or take——

Fane suddenly stood up to move in for the kill

"I think Judge Britt said mildly it is time for a brief recess " He rose his robe swirling about his frail shaky frame and tottered to his chambers

Fane sat down in an iron fury More to himself than to Spartan he muttered Which was bothering the senile old fool—his bladder or his bias?

Like a docile child Spartan allowed the sheriff to lead him to a small closetlike room opening off behind the bench And there after one questioning glance at the sheriff he relieved himself obediently into a bucket.

The sheriff then took his turn leaning thoughtfully against the wall on one elbow That lawyer of yourn, he said is a right smart man But he s not smart in the right way He chuckled at his wit "But damn if the jury can see what the heck Lafe Bailey s horses had to do with it anyway Not so sure I can. Nope not so sure atall Whisht the hell the Nigra d rinch this bucket out once inna while Welp c mon boy "

The trial continued as Dr Bronson resumed the stand Fane tried to make his point again but the jury grew restive with the repetition. At last Fane said in a bored tone 'That will be all

LeRoy bounced to his feet. "Now let s get this clear' Doctor in your coroner s report you stated that Dicey Bailey died from strangulation caused by tetanus—lockjaw—isn t that right?

She did!

'Not from horse serum?" LeRoy s eyes wandered over to Fane

The answer came in as positive a form as Dr Bronson cared to couch it 'Not in Dicey Bailey s case *She* didn t."

"Ste-ep down!"

There was a rustle in the courtroom when Lafe Bailey was called and for a moment Spartan did not recognize the man He came shuffling forward his face scraped raw his eyes bulging slightly from a

collar that was too tight Yet his expression was so woebegone that it aroused murmurs of sympathetic comment to lick at his heels as he took the stand

LeRoy was all tenderness he gentled Lafe along launching him into his sad recital him and two other fellers Lafe was saying eyes directly on Spartan

Spartan began to sweat

" and that one there Lafe pointed the finger of accusation at Spartan he said he was some German doctor He said he could cure her with one little pill

And then?

Well the other two—they stayed outside—but he come in with me

He followed you into the house where your wife was sick in——"

Yessir sick in bed Lafe took his eyes from Spartan and looked dutifully down at LeRoy She was real sick like I told him She was having fits like

You mean she——

Fits! Lafe interrupted loudly Dicey was "

Go on LeRoy said gently

Well when he come to give her this pill he had to kneel on the bed like and open her mouth

LeRoy was appalled *He* had to open her mouth? You mean Mrs Bailey didn t want to take the pill?

Unbelievably a tear was rolling down Lafe s cheek, incongruous against those scraped furrows as a pearl would have been She couldn t open her jaws herself Lafe said clearly He sorta had to pry em open for her

Go on Mr Bailey LeRoy said his voice hoarse

"He tole me—he tole me she—— Lafe s mouth worked and his tongue crept to each corner to lick the tears that had collected there He said she wouldn t need no other medicine for her fits He said she d be fine it d take a while but she d be fine

And you believed him?

Lafe turned his body so that parallel lines could have been drawn between his eyes and Spartan s He tole me he was a great doctor didn t he? said the suffering mouth Shore I believed him

From the back of the room a voice drawled coolly judiciously Why we oughta take him out and string him up ri ght now!

In the ensuing muttering Fane pressed a hand on Spartan s knee Don t look upset. The jury is watching you

LeRoy waited as long as he dared before resuming And did you ever call in a doctor?

I had to by the next Tuesday But it twadn t any use by *then* "

Fane opened his mouth and closed it as suddenly

My God Fane do something! Spartan thought. But Fane sat brooding as Lafe was led into his sobbed account of the death scene

When Fane s time to cross-examine came he rose with all the solemn dignity of an undertaker I shall make this as brief as possible Mr Bailey Believe me sir I understand your sorrow but we are seeking justice in this courtroom and I must ask you to bear with me

One final tear dropped from Lafe s chin as he gazed at Fane trustingly

Now Mr Bailey you said that your wife was having—uh—fits on Thanksgiving Day Could you explain a little clearer what you meant?"

Well " Lafe looked to LeRoy at the exact moment Fane *did* LeRoy sat expressionless unable to help his witness

Yes? Fane urged very gently

Just fits sort of "

Please Mr Bailey I know how painful this is for you But did Mrs Bailey *jerk?* I *mean* did her body or limbs jerk?"

Well sort of

"Now on the following Tuesday five days later you went for Doctor Bronson Was there some change in Mrs Bailey s condition that made you do this?"

Was she worse you mean?

Yes that s what I mean

She—she had a fit that morning Tuesday "

"And it was different from the others?

LeRoy put his hand over his eyes and rubbed his head back and forth across the palm

No Lafe said promptly 'Worse you might say "

Worse in what way?"

Lafe deliberated Then pleased that he could help the kindly, sympathetic Fane he blurted out triumphantly 'The others was sorta crying fits But this one was a *convulsion!*" D

Fane stood for one full minute looking pointedly at the jury They returned his gaze their own relentlessly hostile and uncomprehending

By then the second morning of the trial had come to an end.

IV

As the afternoon session began Spartan turned his head to see the Boswell family sitting solidly in their seats The sight of Mr Boswell s face fat and bland with its accumulation of years of security and authority braced Spartan At the very worst a year in prison maybe and then the Boswell money again He was taking the wisest course Fane to the contrary

A crone hard of hearing, venomous was the state s final witness She testified that she had visited the Baileys early on Thanksgiving Day and had seen Dicey Bailey in a fit" She interrupted herself constantly saying "What? What? though no one had said anything

Fane spent the afternoon educing her definition of the word fit They covered seizures and spasms and visitations and throes and paroxysms and convulsions the jury was bored and Judge Britt querulous Throughout LeRoy chewed his cheeks in satisfaction Finally, cornered the old woman admitted she had seen Dicey Bailey in a crying fit and Fane was content

After Spartan s mother left him that evening in the sheriff's office Fane came in the Tenneville papers under his arm 'Thought you d like to see what the more civilized folk of this state think about your case

As Spartan read he felt warmed There was a picture of himself on the front page and he could not resist a moment s pride thinking Is that the way I look?

The news accounts were full of allegeds the word placed so as to cast a doubt on Spartan s guilt And an editorial devoted to the case was an unconcealed attack on LeRoy Johnson Mr Johnson it seemed did not care for culture nor its citadel the University of Tenneville He was equally careless of the Constitutional guarantees as well as justice He was interested in proving only that Spartan Mc Clintock was a university student and *therefore* guilty of first-degree murder We can see the handwriting on the wall Spartan read

Should LeRoy Johnson receive the verdict he wants on both counts he will use it as his sole political platform for seeking office And unstable and thin though this platform may seem it could easily support his weight as he makes a swift run across it into the office of state s attorney

Spartan snorted LeRoy couldn t run for dog-catcher in this state

Fane began rather Poloniusly "To the young and ambitious there is nothing so ridiculous as observing youth and ambition in anoth—— By the way you won t get to the stand tomorrow I intend to take up the morning addressing the jury and the afternoon with Doctor Goste

It had been heartening for Spartan to learn that Fane had obtained the services of the university s most erudite pathologist Merle Goste M D as their medical expert Only serious seniors or graduate students were ever admitted to his august presence and in con sequence the medical students had bestowed upon that gentleman the fitting title of the Holy Goste

The Holy Goste Spartan predicted airily (he was still somewhat drunk on seeing his name so frequently in print) will have LeRoy feeling like a pickled fetus in a jar

Fane huffed at such levity Then let us hope the jury sees it that way too

v

As he had promised Fane took up Wednesday morning Decem ber 21 with his address to the jury He outlined his case carefully stressing in the assured voice of the lecturer the element of anaphy lactic shock in Dicey Bailey s death He would prove he said un equivocally that Mrs Bailey died as the result of convulsions brought on by the second injection of horse serum The blame he went on with a glance of Christlike forgiveness at the furious Dr Bronson could be laid only at the door of merciless circumstance Dicey Bailey was allergic to horse serum administration of the serum killed her It was a tragedy but an accidental one Whether she was suf fering from tetanus or not had no bearing on the matter Spartan McClintock was on trial for a willful malicious killing when as a matter of fact his actions could not and did not have any part in her death whatsoever

Through all this the jury looked doubtful And whenever their solidarity as one body wavered they had only to look at the amused sneer on LeRoy Johnson s face to regain it in full

Unbelieving sinking into a dull dread Spartan felt himself become dim again He could not convince himself that this was his trial As the papers had said it was LeRoy versus the University, it was Fane unceasingly and as yet futilely wooing a frigid jury It was a game a bout and be himself was as he had read somewhere *hors de combat*

He turned slightly so he could see from the corner of his eye his mother, the Boswells and Imagene Their faces were alive full of fight Even Imagene had forgotten to posture prettily and sat intent her Cupid s bow mouth slightly ajar He felt an almost unendurable tenderness for her as she exhibited for once in her life concern for one other than herself She looked worried uneasy as did her father

The Holy Goste was taking the stand and Spartan returned to his trial with a professional air of disinterest Like a person who has heard so many versions of what he did that time he was so funny at a party he had become confused as to how the truth acturally went Each distortion containing as it did some of the truth became for the moment the whole instead of a mere fragment Now he was swayed this way and an instant later seeing the bellicose disbelief on the faces of the jury went that

autopsy revealed mural endocarditus—er an inflammation of the walls of the heart—as well as myocarditis—an inflammation of the cardiac muscular tissue " The Holy Goste s dry cataloguing of the findings of Dicey Bailey s autopsy continued

In your opinion Doctor Goste what was the immediate cause of death?

Anaphylactic shock unquestionably

Unquestionably Spartan received it listlessly too glutted now on diversification on conflicting testimonies to care

LeRoy was anxious to start his cross examination Before his first question he tried the trick of staring Dr Goste down The Holy Goste met his gaze as blandly as a cow contemplating a passing motorist LeRoy took the plunge

Now I m not a sawbones myself and nobody on this fine jury is either so maybe we d better clear this up a little He waited like a comedian for his reward and it came—a fond chuckle Now this

electric-shock business Just how did you figure Dicey Baily died of it?

I said that the deceased died of anaphylactic shock

LeRoy gazed up at Dr Goste artlessly Oh Electric shock an aphy—— He shrugged frowned and slid his eyes to the jury But I suppose you found that Dicey Bailey had lockjaw too didn t you? Or weren t you looking for anything like that?

The Holy Goste sat unmoved his thin hands resting at ease in his lap

Well? LeRoy challenged

Would you clarify that question? Dr Goste said politely

You mean make it clearer? What s clearer than that? You found out that Dicey Bailey just happened to have lockjaw too didn t you?

Apparently the deceased was suffering from tetanus yes

Apparently eh? Now let s go into this lockjaw testimony a bit deeper After a wound or cut how long does it take for the lockjaw to start? I mean for the person to get sick or start to?

The incubation period varies It could be anywhere from two days to almost as many months

But usually?

"I would say the average incubation period is between five and ten days

Or less?

Or less

What would you say are the first signs that someone has lockjaw?

Dr Goste opened a text book in his mind and began to read Most frequently I would say the presenting symptom is stiffness of the jaw There are other heralds too irritability stiffness in the neck head ache——

Then the convulsions don t come until later?

"I would say the case is fairly well advanced by the onset of con vulsions "

And when a person has lockjaw when would you say is the best time for them to have the serum treatment?

The Holy Goste exhibited a smile as thin as a tissue section Immediately

Let me give you a hypothetical question Suppose a person gets *a scratch on Monday and by Thursday of that week was already* having convulsions and a stiffness of the jaw How long after these

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11

It was not quite light in his cell when the noise awoke him Faintly there filtered through his window on the alley the sounds of young voices and roaring flivvers Shivering he stood on his bunk and peered out of the grimy window

The shouting and put putting of the cars continued A car went past the end of the alley lighting up for an instant some garbage cans But he could learn nothing of the cause of the commotion He slid under the insufficient covering on his bunk and lay there listen ing It came to him that it sounded exactly like college kids going to a football rally

Main Street was crowded with angry townsfolk as he crossed it to the courthouse The sight of Spartan cuffed seemed an added insult and they pressed towards him muttering

"Open it up, open it up the sheriff said calmly 'This here boy would like to get to his trial today

'Us too! a man shouted

The sheriff looked bored Pay's to git up early sometimes Them stoodents mustn t gone to bed all night

The two deputies guarding the courtroom doors opened them enough to admit Spartan and his guardian. Then seeing the court room full of his former fellow students and friends one after another of whom looked around and ceased speaking at his appearance Spartan felt his eyes burn For the first time he suffered deeply at the ignominy of his appearance unshaven rumpled his hair in want of cutting—and the handcuffs "We re with you man someone called out He did not dare smile for fear the tears might escape and run down his cheeks

Through a film of moisture he saw them in the first row Milt, Militant Mac Gus Meunch—and Ez Conklin They all smiled vastly at him like so many amicable heads on one monster On their faces was such a look of ridiculous faith such broad and idiotic encour agement, that they all looked alike

Fane came in a few minutes later Redder than usual he spent considerable care in arranging his notes in studying his plan of pre-

sentation of witnesses and in sharpening his pencils with a patented sharpener shaped like a cone

Ez is not going to testify Spartan said sharply

Fane turned complacent eyes on him Suppose you let me worry about that Well the old courtroom doesn t look the same today does it?

Are you responsible for this? I mean calling out the clans?

Fane looked modest I think the newspapers may have had some thing to do with it And then there s the old Tenneville spirit Of course your friend Milton Salpinger rounded up the med students I imagine Fine young man that Milt Fane s tone indicated that he quite forgave Milt for being a Jew If Milt wanted to be one that was his business Fine young man he repeated pompously most—uh —co operative

And where have you got Buddy Boswell hidden? Spartan de manded

Buddy oh that one Fane grew a touch embarrassed My investigators haven t managed to flush him out That s why the Boswell family skipped out you know In fact— Fane went on blandly, I suggested to them that it would be best under the cir cumstances LeRoy is going to be climbing the walls when he learns who Conklin is He ll know that you and Conklin together can lick this thing So he ll redouble his efforts to find Boswell And Boswell— Fane said looking at Spartan directly is just the coward who would turn state s evidence and lie his head off if he had to At least that s what Milton Salpinger tells me I have to take his word for it—since you haven t bothered to express yours

Spartan burst out impatiently Don t you know that moron of a LeRoy will have Ez arrested the minute he finds out who he is?

Fane s smile was superior Oh I wouldn t worry about that if I were you He knows it s too late for that now If Ezra Conklin can get you off you in turn could get Ezra off LeRoy will let well enough alone Ah and here comes that star of the legal sky our county attorney

Stand up! the sheriff bawled at the assemblage as Judge Britt came struggling up the step to the bench

Spartan looking back briefly caught sight of Ez his face seeming to hang thinly from his bones Beside Ez Milt was arranging his bulk in his seat his expression as avuncular as ever a shepherd guard

ing his one sickly fretful lamb Milt s eye fell on Spartan in calm remonstrance No cutting up now I m taking over this mess from now on

Fane called Gus Meunch to the stand as a character witness As he stood taking the oath the jury observed the squat ugly physician with interest. Their faces wore a look of expectation and when Gus started to answer his first question his gutturals fell on appreciative ears The mountaineer jury leaned forward in delight but as Gus s testimony proved dull—only praise for Spartan—their attention be gan to lag Then LeRoy had his fun with Gus mimicking his accent goading him to outbursts in broken English until Judge Britt said in fond reprimand Now Mr Johnson let s get on with the trial

Momentarily LeRoy sulked and a scattering of the students in the spectators section dared to applaud LeRoy returned to his quarry "Doctor Minch or Munch or whatever you call yourself you d do anything to save Spartan McClintock wouldn t you?

"Don t answer that' Fane shouted furiously

"Oh why bother" LeRoy said negligently to Fane 'The answer is obvious" And to Gus he said "Tha a ts all Step down'"

As Gus left the stand Fane glanced at Spartan speculatively and called out "Ezra Conklin to the stand please

"Ezra Conklin' the clerk echoed

A white and openly frightened Ez climbed to the stand His hands were like searching small animals as they crawled over his lap and the arms of the witness chair as they peeked into his pockets and darted out to run across his chin and the back of his neck Yet de spite the busy agitation of his body his eyes clung unswerving to Fane s face

Fane s opening questions were a drone Your name ac quainted with the on the day of and what if any thing "

" Mr Bailey said there wasn t really anything wrong with his wife Ez was saying when LeRoy began his interruptions

LeRoy objected again and again hoping to destroy the continuity of Ez s testimony Fane was outraged Mr Johnson I cannot be lieve you are sincere I consider these constant interruptions and badgerings prejudicial to——"

Oh my God shut up and get it over with Spartan thought.

Several questions back Ez had begun to perspire Now the beads

stood waxily on his forehead He was relaunched finally was allowed to say that he and the other student Buddy Boswell followed Spartan into Lafe Bailey s house before he was interrupted again

As hampered as a backwoods surgeon removing bone splinters from an unanesthetized patient Fane persevered in extracting Ez s testimony Lunchtime intervened and Fane was not through before the early afternoon His composure was crusted with disgust when he finally turned Ez over to LeRoy

Now then Mr Conklin you re not a doctor are you?"

No, I m still in med school

Tenneville University?

Yes

And you say you and Spartan McClintock went into Lafe Bailey's house to examine his sick wife?

No we didn t go in to examine her

Oh you just went in to treat her?

No we—— Well we——

You and Spartan McClintock went in to give her a pill to cure her is that it?

Well we didn t expect it to *cure* her I mean, it was just an aspirin

You *knew* that whatever was wrong with her an aspirin wasn t going to cure her is that it?

No not that. He said there wasn t anything wrong with her

Did you think Lafe Bailey was a doctor?

' N no

But you took his word for it that a woman suffering from lockjaw wasn t sick at all and gave her a pill Was that a joke on your part?

No we didn t think it was a joke we thought it—we thought—that it would be all right

You went in and saw Dicey Bailey sick with lockjaw but you thought it would be all right just to give her an aspirin pill and let it go at that Was that what happened?

Well I I didn t give her the pill

I know you didn t Mr Conklin If you had you d be on trial for murder! LeRoy rushed the last above the rumble of Fane s objection He watched Ez unblinkingly while Judge Britt ruled in his favor

"Now then Mr Conklin I put it to you that you had nothing at all to do with giving Dicey Bailey that pill did you?

"Nooo—I guess not."

LeRoy moved several feet closer to Ez, and as he did so Ez s hands rose to his face and then fell clutched to each other for protection into his lap

"Mr Conklin, I put it to you that you didn t even go into that house at all did you? You didn t see Dicey Bailey or note her condition at all did you *wait before you answer!* There is an indictment for murder waiting for whoever went into that house! Did you go in?"

Ez closed his eyes 'No I didn t He ventured one piteous glance at Spartan and then drowned in LeRoy s triumphant smirk

"And that other student Buddy Boswell he didn t go in either' LeRoy shrieked

Ez s lips moved "I don t remember they formed

"And you re a little confused as to what Lafe Bailey said aren t you?"

"Yes Ez whispered

"In fact you re not sure at all about him saying there wasn t any thing wrong with his wife

"I—I couldn t swear to it"

"YOU HAVE SWORE TO IT EZRA CONKLIN' LeRoy landed his fist on the rail in front of Ez Now let s have the truth' Did you go into that house?

"No'

You didn t even see Dicey Bailey?

No!"

And Lafe Bailey didn t say a thing about her putting on did he?"

"N no'

"He told you his wife was sick that s all!"

"Yes he said——

And Spartan McClintock *offered* to go in and examine her!

In a way He just——

"You don t know what went on in that house do you?

"No

"All you know is that Lafe Bailey said his wife was sick and Spartan McClintock said he was a doctor and would go in and treat her'

Get her well so Lafe wouldn t need to get another doctor in for her!"

Yes I—— That s about it. I guess

Don t guess Wasn t that exactly what happened?

Yes

When Ez stepped down from the stand he did not look in Spartan s direction once Instead he paused at the counsel table as though awaiting orders LeRoy fiddled with his notes and glancing up dismissed Ez curtly

Still Ez stood Then he turned and walking rigidly went through the bar and down the aisle Watching him Spartan felt almost too weary to be embittered and infinitely too tired to hate

In the back of the room a familiar round face rose above the crowd Half standing Milt too watched Ez go by When the double doors closed behind Ez Milt sank down thoughtfully

All right Fane said suddenly to Spartan It s up to you now There went one of the dear dear friends you were trying to protect What do you want to do? I can get a recess if you want——

I'll go up now Spartan said

Will you follow my lead? I think I can still salvage it if you keep your head

All right Spartan said carelessly

Fane glanced at him sharply Very well " Turning away, he raised his voice to the clerk Call the defendant to the stand

Spartan McClintock!

During his swearing in he had to fight to keep his hands steady Pellets of ice fell from his armpits along his sides

Now Spartan you realize fully that the law does not require you to testify?

Yes He sucked at his cheeks in an effort to stimulate the salivary glands

You are testifying at your own request are you not?

Yes

Fane proceeded reluctantly Occupation age yes, no

I am a medical student University of Tenneville

The roots of his tongue sent shooting pains along his jaws each time he spoke a word His lips were so dry and puffy that each sound had to be spoken with the utmost care lest he lisp He found himself looking suddenly at LeRoy becoming aware of the county attorney s amused grin

"   said that his wife was pretending to have a headache" he heard himself saying He saw that Fane had given him the case to conclude as he would The lawyer harassed by LeRoy hindered by his client, disappointed by his star witness had disposed of the matter as being most regrettable most upsetting and as far as he was concerned finished

"I went into the house alone Spartan said Just Mr Bailey and myself The other two stayed outside

"Yes yes Fane said almost like Mrs Dunnock

"Mrs Bailey was lying in bed I did not touch her or examine her in any way I gave her the aspirin and she took it without water She didn t say anything and neither did I Then I left

"I see" Fane said pointlessly I see He looked at his pencil and taking up the patented sharpener started to twist it idly After a moment he turned aimlessly to LeRoy "Your witness sir

LeRoy walked to the rail of the jury box and turning three-quarters away from it shouted "I put it to you that almost everything you ve said is a lie!

No" Spartan said wearily

'Then you were so drunk you can t remember what happened!

I was a little drunk yes But I can remember everything that happened

You re saying then that you drunkenly pretended to be a doctor and convinced Lafe Bailey that you were one?

I don t know whether I convinced him or not

"You mean you didn t care whether you convinced him or not!

"I didn t care no Spartan said dully

It didn t mean a thing to you that Dicey Bailey had lockjaw either did it?

I wasn t aware that she was ill at all

You didn t even bother to find out did you?

I told you I did not examine her in any way

You mean it s the custom for you *university* doctors to go around giving people pills without knowing whether they re sick or not and without even caring if they are Is that it?

That is not the custom and I am not a doctor

Oh that s right you just pretended to Lafe that you were is that it?

Yes

LeRoy wallowed in his inquisition Each act of that chill Thanksgiving afternoon was broadened made grosser wrung of all its spontaneity until it went beyond a matter of negligence and became the deliberate and depraved Spartan grew insanely obstinate determined to stand by his lies even more than his truths He opposed LeRoy in a frenzy of loathing lying now and then balking the county attorney by suddenly confronting him with the truth At last receiving the answer Yes again and again to the most brutally contrived questions LeRoy lost his taste for the sport

The county attorney had been forced into the position of beating a dead dog and even the jury began to stir restlessly

When LeRoy finally sank into his seat with a muttered, That s all Spartan looked out into the courtroom and saw his mother s face ugly and sagging under its weight of tears Farther back Gus Meunch sat with his eyes covered by a hand and beside him Milt Salpinger pondered some knotty and abstruse problem of his own

Spartan stood up and then in sudden panic could not force himself to leave the stand There was still time he could signal to Fane he could turn to Judge Britt and announce in the compelling voice of the innocent that he had changed his mind that he wanted to tell how it really had been with Buddy and Ez and himself all involved in a situation in which they had only acted thoughtlessly All of them All three of them Make them take their punishment with me!

Instead he stepped down

If possible Judge Britt said I would like to see this matter go to the jury this afternoon Would counsel be willing to stipulate to a time limit on their closing remarks?

I won t need moren forty minutes LeRoy said happily

Nor I Fane agreed still twisting the pencil sharpener in his hands

Then I shall call a ten minute recess before you proceed Mr Johnson

The judge rose and scurried to his chambers

Spartan looked at Fane and Fane said Don t bother to say anything I wouldn t know how to answer you Just be quiet and let me think what on earth I m going to tell that jury when it comes back in

What s going to happen to me? Spartan asked but Fane was

bent over his notes ignoring him Almost to himself he added But I still just gave her an aspirin. That s all that s absolutely all

The sheriff was suddenly behind his chair "You wanna go to the terlet?"

It was LeRoy s hour of glory, and he made certain that the reporters were in their places before he began Ostentatiously he laid a pocket watch on the railing of the jury box and then addressed the court and jury solemnly The jury listened at first intently and later with feigned interest until he had covered the legal aspects of the case

"I tell you gentlemen LeRoy said "that there lay in Spartan McClintock s heart so callous a disregard for the welfare of Dicey Bailey so vile and malicious a sense of humor that in his drunken state he could have seen her dying in fits before his face—*and laughed!* All he was interested in was making Lafe believe he was a big doctor from Tenneville

LeRoy had barely begun to vent his spleen

Later he lifted his watch by its chain and dangled it The hours were ticking off even then While Spartan McClintock was giving her that pill the minutes and seconds of Dicey s life were ticking away The watch swung slowly back and forth "There was just twenty- four hours to save her

As the pendulum of the watch slowed LeRoy watched it silently hypnotizing the jury with it "Ticking away he repeated when the watch finally came to a standstill

The jury and courtroom stirred

You know why he did it?

The jury started and LeRoy laughed mirthlessly I ll tell you—for a joke Just a little stoodent s prank After all Dicey was just a hillbilly like you and me Hillbillies don t mean a thing to Tenneville folks

LeRoy did not stop railing for the duration of his forty minutes When he concluded he seemed satisfied that he had just convicted the University of Tenneville of being *in existence* He turned the jury over to Fane his mouth chewing itself uncontrollably

Fane was assured and thoughtful He was also wasting forty min

utes of his valuable time He said among other things that Spartan came from a small town about the size of Britt s Lick that it was un fortunate that Dicey Bailey was dead that the jury was surely com posed of just and wise men that Spartan McClintock was innocent

The foreman of the jury yawned

Fane s time had run out He unfolded his arms and said simply There is only one verdict you can bring back there is only one verdict possible not guilty' It is your duty to inform this court that the defendant is not guilty'

I rest assured gentlemen that you will

In rebuttal LeRoy said he himself was a hillbilly Dr Goste was not a hillbilly The University of Tenneville was located in the city of Tenneville Spartan McClintock was a murderer a fiend and a student at the University of Tenneville He hoped sincerely that the jury would agree

In conclusion LeRoy shouted It s a felony to practice medicine without a license in this state

Any death caused by or arising from the perpetration of a felony is murder First degree murder

Spartan McClintock murdered Dicey Bailey as sure as if he put a shotgun to her head

You know it and I know it Now let s let the University of Tenne ville and the state of Kennassee know it'

He s guilty as hell Now you will go in that jury room and find him so

Guilty' Guilty' Guilty' That s the verdict Now come back with it'

The jury took a late afternoon siesta while Judge Britt droned out their instructions and then they filed out

Spartan sat in his cell and waited No one was allowed to see him Time had turned sullen it did not want to pass but hovered over him motionless like LeRoy s watch before the jury Fane had told him that the longer a jury stayed out the more favorable became the defendant s chances An instant unanimous verdict was invariably guilty Somehow Fane s legal homilies were of scant comfort

He did not doubt that he had surely grown gaunt from these end

less hours of waiting He sat upright on his bunk his mind destitute of thoughts his body of ease

The sheriff came accompanied by a newsman A bulb flashed.

"Jury s in the sheriff said Come on boy

Suddenly it seemed of vast importance to know what time it was He had to clear his throat before he could get the words out.

"It s a little after eleven the sheriff said

"What time exactly?" he asked desperately

The reporter seemed to understand "It s eleven-sixteen They sent out word that they d come to a decision at eleven ten"

"Let s us shut up the sheriff suggested as they stepped out into the street

Inside the crowded courtroom only a baby s wailing could be heard and it quieted immediately at Spartan s entrance as though a breast had been hastily shoved into its fretful mouth

That kid ought to be in bed Spartan thought crazily

Fane looked at him blankly "Well——" he began and then resumed his staring at the empty jury box as was LeRoy Spartan looked there too and found he could not look away Twelve empty chairs held his gaze as no beauty ever had before

"Ready? the clerk said suddenly and Spartan twitched

Fane nodded and LeRoy said almost in a stammer Bring em in

The jury filed in stumbling and grinning A tired Judge Britt demanded "Gentlemen have you reached a verdict?

The foreman lumbered to his feet smiled at someone in the spectators section and orated We sure have Your Honor

The judge read the verdict and gazed down at Spartan A fierce pain like an arm thrust up from his stomach rammed the gorge up into his throat His heart pounded with strong slow vagal beats and he dimly felt the pulses at each knee and at the throat and navel

"What is your verdict? the clerk asked the foreman

"We find the defendant guilty of murder in the second degree

Someone in the rear clapped

Vomitus spewed into Spartan s mouth and at the same time his head jerked violently to one side as though he had been dealt a stunning blow

Fane was bellowing, Your Honor I demand the jury be polled!"

The spittoon at the foot of the bench seemed of solid gold under

the electric lights There was a fly floating in the brown liquid. Above a roaring in his head Spartan heard the jurors voices calling out faintly like cries of distress drowned in a stormy sea

" second degree murder
murder second degree
How find you?
" murder second degree "

Deep in his skull Spartan heard the gathering thunder *This is happening to me*

Judge Britt had to stifle a yawn I will sentence the defendant at one o clock tomorrow afternoon

The courtroom sighed and burst into clamor It had been a fine trial all right but now nothing would look as good as bed

Fane said loudly heartily to Spartan Now let s not look like that We ll get that appeal going right The rest was lost

In his cell he lay down and wept without sound like a deaf mute in despair the hot tears running across his cheeks to gather in pools in his ears Towards morning he slept, dreaming of young Dr Spartan McClintock stepping out of Lafe Bailey s cabin into the full morning of his career forgetting that Spartan McClintock M D had died one night at the age of twenty four

vii

In the morning Friday December 23 Fane s manner was so banal that it veered on the preposterous He spoke flatly of new trials appeals the one hundred exceptions he had taken in the trial of upsetting verdicts

Mr Fane would you shut up a minute? ' Spartan ignored the lawyer s insulted stare the condemned are careless of the niceties "Just tell me what I m likely to get

At least twenty years Fane said bluntly

At one minute after 1 00 P M that same day Judge Britt sentenced Spartan McClintock to be *imprisoned in the state penitentiary* located at Massacre Gap Kennassee for the time prescribed *by law from twenty years* to the end of his natural life

"That s it" Fane said as Judge Britt wavered down from the bench "The rest is up to me All you have to do is wait"

VIII

Christmas Eve he was taken into the office to find Milt warming his pudgy hands over the stove Milt looked at him with equanimity as Spartan came through the door Season s greetings he said evenly "And what do we want Santa Claus to bring us this year?"

Spartan s voice teetered on tears 'My God Milt——"

"I bring messages of cheer to you from that harlot of our fair state the University Milt said quickly avoiding Spartan s eyes Gus says to tell you to keep a stiff upper obiscularis oris the Holy Goste has handed down a Word to the effect——"

"And Ez Conklin? Spartan cut in "What word of cheer does——"

Milt s face seemed to be flowing downward as though the fat under the skin had melted from the heat of the stove and were forming puddles about his mouth

"Ez Conklin Milt said " Ez Conklin committed suicide last night. He did it in you walls room Yours and Buddy s He got Buddy s gun and put the stock on the floor Then he hung his head directly over the barrel. He had to take off one shoe to push the trigger with his toe

Their eyes met held

"You might as well say it, Milt said

"Milt what the hell did you hope for! You knew he couldn t stand up to LeRoy you must have known——

I just thought the jury would feel sorry for him and you d both get off easy I figured even that *Pithecanthropus erectus* jury would see he was half dead Fartin we ve got to look ahead to your appeal That s all that s important!

No I m through Spartan said in a light indifferent voice I feel it in my bones Milt

Milt s eyes dropped first "O K. then Jesus McClintock let me ask you the question You started the whole mess—what did you hope for?

Me? Why I hoped they d pin a medal on me I was sure LeRoy would kiss me on both cheeks and then send me up for twenty to

life—*twenty to life Milt*—and then Ez Conklin would rush out and shoot himself for sheer joy Oh Christ, does it matter?"

Rising from his post by the window the sheriff said, Don t reckon it does now boy Visitin time s over ennyway

I ll try to see you again Milt said quickly I don t know about up there but——

They call it The penitentiary located at Massacre Gap Spartan informed him Judge Britt was so kind as to let me know all about it He broke off and then added in a rush Milt, I don t mean to take it out on you——

Suppose you kiss each other good by the sheriff suggested genially He placed a proprietary hand on Spartan s shoulder

Milt looked away from the gesture then back at Spartan There was a strange tight smile on his mouth You know what I think Fartin? Do you know what I honestly think about you and your crazy paranoid nobility? In the immortal words of Mrs Dunnock Lovely Spartan McClintock yes yes lovely——

Milt grabbed up his coat from the chair and ran in the awkward trot of the overweight to the door He did not look back even once before he went out slamming the door

Purty nice feller that Jew boy the sheriff said thoughtfully "Good friend to have

Spartan s voice was raw with regret, Yes but *he* never had any money

The sheriff stared at him

IX

On the morning of New Year's Eve Fane came back to Britt s Lick His face was redder than ever and his eyes bloodshot but whether from work or Christmas cheer Spartan couldn t guess

You see Spartan Fane said too hurriedly Judge Britt was quite a man in his day Almost ran for governor and all that But then he had a stroke and they retired him back to the town his gran daddy had founded—here—and——

'That s very interesting Spartan said

Fane looked away ' I m trying to make you understand what happened You see two of Judge Britt s old friends happen to be on the appellate court bench

"You didn t get the appeal

"No"

His disappointment was a racking physical agony that spread even to the ends of his fingers After all he had been hoping hoping hoping all along

Fane stood up I'll go to work on the Parole Board as soon as it s feasible Naturally, I can t promise anything——"

"I appreciate what you ve done for me sir" Spartan said formally "I m sorry I couldn t quite do what you wanted me to"

Breckinridge Fane moved his lips but no sound came out Immediately thereafter he left.

The sheriff swung the cell block door open for Fane and then ambled down to where Spartan stood holding onto the bars

Feel like taking a little train ride boy?

"Today?

"'Fraid so" The sheriff searched for a morsel of food caught in his teeth licking it from his finger before taking his hand away from his mouth Sorry boy Massacre Gap s the last place I want to see today either

BOOK III

Diagnosis and Treatment

1

IN WINTER the mountain ranges of Kennassee have a certam desolate and foreboding beauty These ranges have been there a long time rising once defiantly even out of a broad shallow sea that covered this entire part of the continent. Ages ago dark rivers bur rowed through the rock sought lower levels and after brief millions of years disappeared. They say that in the resulting caves you can see fossil imprints on the walls calling cards of those hardy animals who came early and stayed late

The mountains themselves are like the skeletal spine of some departed monster and in winter the ridges knobs and peaks protrude black and glistening through the deep snows like vertebrae

One of these knobs gazes down onto a high valley known as Mas sacre Gap Here over a hundred years ago a party of settlers came threading through working their way south Above on the ridges Indians watched Of that party only three escaped to babble of the ambush and massacre up at the gap And of that three only two still wore their scalps

The Gap might have remained further undisturbed had not coal been discovered there Coal as the sheriff rambled on to Spartan that was mined by the prisoners for the use of the state and its insti tutions

The train a local was working its way northeast, climbing slowly upwards from the foothills about Britt s Lick Outside the windows a gray sky sulked occasionally releasing rain to run in grimy streams down the panes Up in the front part of the smoker a New Year s Eve party was in progress and the sheriff glanced that way wistfully and then down again to the wrist that was manacled to Spartan s "Don t suppose you ve ever done any mining before? he asked conversationally

F

Spartan McClintock continued his blind staring out the window and did not answer The bleak landscape passing by the exposed shards of slate jutting almost over the tracks continuously dripping water the denuded woods only seemed to mirror the desolation he saw within

Somewhere during the trip the rain turned first to sleet and finally to the tiny dry crystals that denote a bitter piercing cold Darkness came on a little after four and by this time the train was wending its way thoughtfully around steep curves and over trestles as though it had never traversed this way before Snow flurries danced in the dark just outside the windows but beyond them there was nothing to be seen for miles and miles there was not a light anywhere Once they paused interminably on a siding until with a rush and a searching cry of its whistle the Tenneville Express streamed by on its way home There was a flashing of windows and in the dining car a brief glimpse of the waiters setting the tables Then the darkness closed in again and with a howl of agony from its own whistle his train jerked and ground its way forward again

The New Year s party forward waxed merrier

Finally dimly through the snow flurries ahead Spartan detected a light on the tracks A hideous little brown shed slid into view its sign swaying gently under one naked bulb

The station sign read MASSACRE GAP

Welp the sheriff said stretching as though they had just completed a picnic journey to Grandma s reckon we re here He tugged on the manacles and Spartan rose The party in the front of the car interrupted one of its jokes long enough to stare at the departing passengers In the vestibule a belated greeting floated out Hap-pee New Year! and then the sheriff and Spartan stepped down into the bitter night

The interior of the station contained a blazing stove one brown bench a combined ticket agent s and station master s cubicle and in the corner farthest from the stove two rickety chairs plainly marked COLORED Inside the cubicle an ancient with a face like a chunk of gristle watched Spartan and the sheriff approach

Got yuh a customer the sheriff said cheerfully The boys gone up yet?

'T'ain t time They'll be along Who s this one?

"McClintock.

"Ho?" The agent peered through his window with quickened interest

From outside the train bell clanged its warning There were a few experimental chuffs and the station began to vibrate Now the train was moving slowly emitting long low cries from its whistle Four last cars drifted by and finally only the red light on the end winked back through the snow

It came to Spartan then that he had been deposited without hope, in the world of Massacre Gap

A group of warmly dressed men came in to collect noisily about the stove Then the station began to shake again as an engine came in on another track.

Here we go boys " the agent said

He was led through a back door out into the night. The engine herding a single car before it bore down on him When the car stopped he saw that it was barred at the windows and both doors A bullish man alighted and approached them There was an exchange of papers and then pulling off his glove with his teeth the sheriff unlocked the manacles Immediately another pair appeared this time to lock Spartan s wrists together

O.K. you come on

Hey " the sheriff cried suddenly His lashes were speckled with snow as he looked at Spartan Just—uh—good luck boy He turned in embarrassment and strode to the station

Over here his new guard said and shoved him up into the barred car

He sat under the single lantern on a long bench Gradually the car filled with guards who sprawled on one of the two benches and talked or cursed in bored voices Every word came out as vapor and many stomped their feet constantly to keep warm in the unheated cage The last lap of the journey began

He found out later that that endless trip with himself huddled under the swaying lantern took no longer than a half hour

Lights appeared in the cold hell of the night wooden buildings like long sheds loomed whitely in the dark and the car went through an opened gate of a high cyclone fence

Harvard College for boys! a wag yelled out and the others laughed dutifully or not at all as though this remark had been made

many times before His bullish guardian gave Spartan a shove O K. you Get on over to that door

He obeyed like an animal plodding his way on icy feet to the door indicated The train halted and he saw under a carpet of snow the wooden sheds and shops the enginehouse and switchyard and off in the distance the lighted maw in the side of a mountain all comprising the prison camp at Massacre Gap

At intervals along the cyclone fence lighted towers seemed to float aloft in the snow Within sat men at guns

Home Spartan thought dully welcome home

Behind him someone coughed and cursed Goddamn hope the second shift s got them goddamn stoves lit hot Colder n a witch s——

He was marched some forty odd yards across the snow passing a long two-story shed to reach the entrance of a neat cottage constructed of brick. The hallway of the house was warmly carpeted and on the walls were paintings of a brace of ducks and a species of fish unknown to Spartan still struggling on a cruel hook. Shoving Spartan towards a door the guard reached around him and tapped gently

Well come in come in called out the querulous voice of petty officialdom

Behind an uncluttered desk sat a man of fifty His face and figure seemed stuffed with goodies and his chin was so deeply cleft that, as Spartan was to learn later the prisoners all felt he should sit down on it He looked Spartan over insultingly McClintock

Spartan did not reply

I said you McClintock?

After answering Spartan was loudly informed by the guard that he was to add sir at the conclusion of any remark

The warden leaned back and his serge coat fell open to reveal a vest stuffed with cigars All right I know all about you McClintock You and your kind So I m just going to tell this to you once You might think that just because you ve had a bit more schooling than the rest of them here that you deserve better You don t Take that as a warning The mine foreman will assign you your job in the morning He motioned at the guard Take him for his physical and then put him in Number Two

About the physical sir the guard said 'The doc—uh——"

Oh Yes Then just take him on over to Two The boys there can do it.

Spartan was shoved into a stumbling turn and pushed out into the cold night again his ungloved cuffed hands aching painfully He was pushed through the snow towards one of the long heds He was pushed into the door he was pushed towards a desk at which two more guards were seated Beyond the desk behind a steel barred door was a dormitory containing some fifty men A sour odor drifted out like the fetid breath of a giant

One of the guards inspected Spartan lazily 'This n Mac—something—or other? One more crowded in here he said address ing his partner and they ll be sleeping on toppa each other

Spartan s personal guard sniggered Some of them do anyways

O K you I'll take off them cuffs He grabbed Spartan s frozen wrists and twisted to get at the lock He s all yours boys Oh—the warden said you wall do the physical on him

A desk chair scraped The doc at it again? Or still?

Still Boys on the first said he was out cold already at noon

So long He gave Spartan a final meaningless push and departed

One of the desk guards searched the drawers and discovered a wrinkled sheet of paper and a stub of pencil O K you How old re you?"

Twenty four

Tall?

Six feet

"Weight?"

About one fifty "

Lice?

"No

"How many teeth yuh got?

All of them

The guard frowned and calculated Twenty say how many of them is it?

'Thirty two Spartan said automatically

When I want you to say something I ll ask you' He returned to his partner

"Thirty two" the partner said

Got clap er anything?

There was a silence Then with deliberate insanity, Spartan said You speaking to me?

He felt himself crashing against the steel bars behind him blood streaming from the cut on the side of his head where the manacles had lashed him He clung swinging his head to clear it

Smart guy huh?

The guard conducting the physical examination made a careful annotation on the scrap of paper Came in with cut on head Well that does it O K smart guy in you go

Walls! the other guard shouted and within the long cage the men scrabbled to line up along the walls between the cots

Spartan half fell through the door when it swung inwards to admit him Staggering he followed his guide past first one stove and then another to a cot almost at the end of the dormitory Absolute silence was maintained during the entire journey

At the foot of the cot a pair of cotton pants and a shirt awaited him Automatically he removed his own clothes wiping his head on his shirt before handing it to the guard Dressed in his prison finery, he waited mutely for further orders

Someone said something dimly but he could not distinguish the words for he was losing consciousness His head throbbed once, a drum roll of pain and then he plunged gratefully into the black re gions of his mind

It was still dark when the whistle ripped open his slumber like a knife through a sack of grain Fragments of thought shreds of dreams spilled out and suddenly he was awake The lights in the ceiling were on and men were stumbling to their feet At the foot of his cot lay a worn Mackinaw His fellow prisoners were pulling theirs on and buttoning them to the chin Four buckets he had not noticed before a pair at each end of the room were in constant use Stuporously he joined a line to await his turn

They were marched out into the dark and snow past the warden s cottage towards the large two-story shed Other groups were already in crude formation lustily marking time to stir numb feet. At a whistle they stumped into a room filled with benches and tables As

they passed in the men could see the first streaks of cold gray light beyond the ridges to the east

There was a surprising amount of food hot grits salt pork chunks of bread drowned in blackstrap and great mugs of coffee The men ate ravenously stoking themselves for the day in the mine Amid the gorging and grunting Spartan sat motionless

His head had begun to hurt again and looking down at the slop of food on his plate his mind said thoughtfully I may have to kill myself somehow

His name was called twice before he reacted to it A guard stood behind him You deef or something? I said get up!

He climbed out from the table and made himself the sixth of a group which were clustered around the guard Without explanation they were marched out of mess and back into the snow The Gap was brimful of morning now promising a day as clear as moving winter water Ahead the maw of the mine entrance was a solid black object against the white shrouded mountain and a switch engine chuffing along the tracks took on the gaiety of an excursion special in this winter resort setting

In the daylight he saw that the camp was enclosed by a double cyclone fence nine or ten feet tall liberally strung along the top with barbed wire The entire enclosure was egg-shaped with its bulge bisected by the tracks To the north of the tracks lay the warden s cottage the two-story mess hall six wooden sheds or dorms and on the northeast nearest the mine entrance a smaller shed. Below the tracks which emerged from the mine was another shed a small brick structure that looked like a powerhouse a minute but efficient appearing switchyard and beyond that where the tracks sped out of the Gap in shining freedom a semiexposed train shed for the convenience of exiting or incoming personnel There was also a road running from the warden s cottage towards a second opening in the fences but it lay smooth and undisturbed only the stones set along its border indicating where or what it was

The guard called them to a halt Like Spartan the other members of the detail seemed new to the Gap and they stumbled against one another awkwardly executing the order Squinting against the brightness of the snow the guard pointed to the fences strung along about four feet apart "Just want to set you wall straight on something

Now, there s a electrified wire running along the top of them fences somewheres You don t have to know which un it is and if you re smart you ll never try to find out O K get moving And head for the shower shed that s the one nearest the mine

In the chill damp shower shed men by the hundreds must have caught their deaths of colds Barely heated it contained no stalls but a few naked pipes thrust out over the drains in the islands of cement in the floor In the center of the room was a post with a pair of manacles fastened to it about head high

Beyond the shower room was a smaller cubicle with a large scowl ing individual behind the inevitable desk The most notable thing about this man other than his size was the blackness of his hair It was sincerely to be doubted if any spot on his body lacked a filament of down that was not of the same hue as the mat on his head Even his nostrils were clogged with a rich growth so that they looked like minor representations of the mine entrance

"Here s the new ones Mitch the guard said

Mr Mitchell to these guys Mitch said as though unconvinced of this himself All right men In case you re wondering I m the mine foreman Any of you ever been in a mine before?

Several of the men shuffled but no one said anything

"That s what I like to hear! Mitch snorted You—the one with the mustache what did you do before?

"Me? The mustache raised delicately from a handsome mouth Safecracker came the prideful answer

Well thanks be to God! Mitch said "Then you ve handled ex plosives haven t you?

Mustache shrugged judiciously On occasion

Mitch now stared at Spartan with the air of a man who already satisfied does not wish to appear greedy but is merely exercising a formality in asking for more You with the bloody head oh for God s sake why do they send me something like that? He turned to the guard Will you take him outa here before he falls down or something? Take him on up to the infirmary and leave the rest with me " He had to raise his voice at the last to shout over a whistle toot ling two longs and a short And snap it back will you?

The guard motioned to Spartan and then pushed him towards the door Mitch had already forgotten him and was now gazing fondly on the safecracker and asking his name

II

The infirmary occupied the second floor of the mess shed and as they came up the stairs at the narrow end of the building Spartan saw the guards lolling at still another desk at the head of the flight. Reaching the top he was herded into a room that was literally a cage for two of its walls consisted only of bars One of the prisoners lining the bench in the cage moved over and made room for him

He sat down and looking through this cage into a larger one on the opposite side of the stairs he beheld a man sitting on a chipped white stool The man was bared to the waist back to Spartan and on that back was a monstrous carbuncle already painted and ready for incision and drainage The man s hand crept apprehensively towards his back the other following after its mate to which it was manacled

Someone in a white coat appeared from that portion of the clinic cage hidden by the stairwell The patient looked up once and then bent his head in his manacled hands in terrified resignation Next to Spartan a prisoner muttered in a queasy voice I m gunna be sick and even the guards turned their heads and stared fixedly down the stairs

Spartan leaned forward attentively unaware that his sullen protective apathy had deserted him

"All right hold his head the man in the white coat snapped to a prisoner acting as his assistant No not now you half wit after you ve laid out the *instruments for me* And be careful *godammit*, I ve shown you a hundred times how to——"

Abruptly the patient groaned a long expiration of breath that came out of his lungs like a deep despairing note on an organ

Take it easy White Coat advised He held a small beaker con taining what looked like a shot of likker to the patient s mouth "You ll feel a lot better once this thing is cleaned out Ready?

The patient shrieked as White Coat bent over him and Spartan realized with a turning over of his own stomach that the likker con stituted the sole anesthesia to be used A wild pleading and clamor filled the cages and the assistant was thrown about wretchedly as he clung to the patient s head. The prisoners in the bull pen covered their ears and swallowed convulsively the guards grew waxy faced

and one threw his head about anxiously as though searching for a handy spittoon or some other receptacle Lightning streaks of blood and pus were now streaming down the patient s back White Coat went on with his mopping out swiftly deftly And when the assist ant fainted slumping into the patient s lap just before the patient himself fainted Spartan found himself grinning at White Coat s noisy disgust

Well for Chrissakes one of you guards!" White Coat yelled clinging to the sagging patient

The guards stared at each other wildly

Spartan was on his feet I'll do it

White Coat turned his head and surveyed him from a long thin sardonic face The man had the coloration of a weathered rock skin hair mouth were merging shades of gray only the eyes blue and now extremely bloodshot deviated from the monochromatic pattern

Then get the hell over here' White Coat said

One of the guards led him into the clinic cage with the alacrity of gratitude

Spartan propped up the patient and searched for one of the man acled hands He found the pulse rapid but still strong and fairly steady He nodded at White Coat who was already again at his swabbing

Keep that pulse checked for me White Coat said absently timing his words with the movements of his right hand at the moment Knew this would happen but our anesthetics are likker and chloroform around here He looked down at his assistant who was rousing Can t trust that moron with chloroform he d have them dead for me by the time I made my first incision How s that pulse?

Little faster" Spartan said

O K I m mopping it up now The bloodshot gaze met Spartan s in brief appraisal How did you get that blow on your head?

I was naughty last night. His pulse is getting faint Doctor

The bandaging went on smoothly as White Coat called out Any body out there conscious enough to help carry this man to a bed? Receiving a faint reply from the bull pen he grimaced at Spartan ' You and the other one carry him He nodded towards his assistant.

A guard admitted them through a barred gate and into the main

part of the infirmary Stumbling along with his burden Spartan caught glimpses of a room that contained an antiquated operating table and little else another next to it furnished exclusively with another stained table and two large buckets— They would have the morgue above the messhall he thought—past a locked door and then into a large windowless area containing several benches and finally into the ward with its dozen or so cots and the morning sun streaming cheerfully through the barred windows

They grunted and placed the unconscious man front down on a cot The assistant produced a worn nightshirt that appeared from its coarseness to have been made of a material slightly less rigid than canvas

Hurry up and unmanacle him " Spartan said to the guard And to the assistant, Don t stand there find the ammonia or get some compresses! He undressed the patient and covered him warmly taking great care as he drew the rough blanket over the bandaged area and noting at the same time without commenting on it to him self that he had been obeyed without question

Stitching Spartan s scalp the prison doctor said "I figured you had to be McClintock Read about your case in the papers A lousy break "

Thanks "

"Quit jerking away from me I meant to have you sent up here as soon as you arrived but I——

Oww! Sorry God—— Doctor that s a *little* sensitive

"Maybe you d rather have a carbuncle Anyway I was —the doctor hesitated— I was busy yesterday Let s see your pu pils O K Did you vomit any time last night?

No

"Feel any symptoms of concussion?

No Doctor

'Then that s it.

Spartan rose from the stool and the guard opened the door of the clinic for him The physician did not bother to look at the guard with his bloodshot eyes as he said McClintock s staying here You can take that idiot trusty down in his place

The guard began Doctor Fuqua McClintock s supposed to be maximum security——"

Oh shut up Dr Fuqua said in a bored voice Go on get them

out of here I'll square McClintock with Warden Weems He was already opening a smaller door of the clinic that led into the crude operating room Come on McClintock I ll show you around In cidentally my name s Andrew Fuqua I graduated from Tenneville in 07

Spartan s throat was thick his eyes stung after he had waited so long and so hopelessly after he had finally given up he now had after all a kind of reprieve And when Dr Fuqua carelessly opened a door and pointed to a room crowded with books medical journals several spavined but inviting chairs and a desk littered with more medical journals charts overflowing ash trays and a silver flask lying empty on its side waving his hand and saying I pig it in here My bedroom s through that door You make yourself at home here of course Spartan stared greedily and managed only a moist-eyed ludicrous gulping Thanks

By four that afternoon Spartan had changed the dressing on the carbuncle patient put clean sheets on the cot of the patient who was comatose and dying of pneumonia hand fed another who would probably recover worried about the lunch utensils and bedding of the carbuncle patient getting mixed with those for general use, cleaned up the clinic and prowled and poked curiously into a broom closet another room containing a sink and a hot plate and a third containing an alcohol lamp several reagent bottles (two of which were empty and dust-covered and the rest conveniently unlabeled) along with some etched glassware and a rack of filmed test tubes and had settled himself and his Mackinaw in the cubbyhole off the ward washroom that was to be his castle—by that time the supper trays were due to come up

And by that time also Dr Andrew Fuqua was in on his bed dead drunk On the floor at his bedside was a liter beaker a third full of grain alcohol and a smaller beaker containing a remnant cc or so of a mixture of grain alcohol and water All day he had refilled the smaller from the larger adding water from whatever faucet was nearest

Spartan came quietly into Fuqua s office and peeked in the bed room door A deep snore drifted out and he left tiptoeing A mo ment later the supper tray detail was clattering its way up the stairs from the mess kitchen The guards at the desk watched indifferently

as Spartan walked in and out through the main doors helping with the trays

Fuqua loaded again? one guard asked curiously

Spartan didn t answer pushing the barred door shut behind him with a crash He had not been quite sure he could get away with his disdainful silence He did

After supper he rounded up a scrub brush and a bar of yellow soap Entering into a brief debate with himself he finally chose the lab instead of the diet kitchen The labeling of the reagent bottles *gave considerable pause but after cautious swirling of the liquids in* their containers and sniffings and testings with both fingertips and some rolls of ancient brittle litmus paper he completed the job

He tumbled into his own cot around nine His head ached his back ached and he wanted a cigarette desperately Yet his body stretched full length under the three blankets he had appropriated for himself and luxuriated in its weariness like a cat New Year s Day 1928 was almost over

Yet tonight he would almost have made the absurd statement that he was happy

iii

It was rather as if he were back in school He worked side by side with Fuqua in the clinic assisted in surgery nodding occasionally during the lecture that explained each movement of Fuqua s hands (and struggling frantically with the wild temptation to hang hemo stats from Fuqua s gray brows for no reason except that the brows were bushy and the hemostats would have had more than sufficient purchase and would have swung gracefully) and making no com ment when the tipsy frantically concentrating Fuqua dropped what ever he had just removed from the patient on Spartan s shoes instead of into the bucket He peered into the microscope right after Fuqua did listened through the stethoscope probed poked percussed pried and pored over everything his instructor did and in exactly the same way

He trotted after the weaving Fuqua heeling as happily as the well trained dog And when his intoxicated protector and teacher made such soggy observations as All of us in Massacre Gap are in prison in one way or another Spart Some of us like poor fetus faced War

den Weems, or the guards are driven here by stupidity The rest are being punished by the state—or ourselves *he nodded* sagely sternly repressing his spontaneous mental snicker Later on he was to judge the exact degree of Fuqua s intoxication by such remarks

When he wasn t being educated or waiting on Fuqua he worked endlessly There were always instruments to be sterilized urinals to be washed floors to be scrubbed baths to be given and beds to be changed Since his advent at the Gap the infirmary had taken on somewhat the appearance of a hospital and less that of a pest house

One morning he awoke to find his window streaked with rain and looking out saw against a sky full of dirty tumbled clouds the knobs at the periphery of the Gap dull black with edges as sharply defined as though cut from cardboard with a razor Down the ridges and into the Gap itself marched the barren trees their boles washed gun metal clean and glistening Yet there was the feeling that should the sun appear for an instant Massacre Gap would burst into green and spring would rush across the ridges and pour into the bowl like a solid waterfall of life

Almost four months Spartan thought I ve been here four months and it seems forever

IV

Indian summer in the Gap must have delighted the savage heart There were orange woods to roam ridges on which one could crouch motionless commanding the Gap and waiting for game to appear *and nights brisk enough to stir one into doing something* positive about further populating the tribe

Indian summer Spartan McClintock opined to Dr Fuqua after clinic one morning was one helluva time to start thinking about women Fuqua snorted and said You ll atrophy Spart Just give yourself time He rose beaker in hand Clean up the mess will you? I ll be in my sty if you need me '

Spartan tidied the clinic and looked in on the ward The fracture case was resting submerged in pain and a troubled sleep The in evitable pneumonia cases two of them this time were convalescing

There was also a case of incipient tuberculosis one of a bashed head and one patient lay on his front exposing a bandaged back The last had gotten the strap the day before

Taking his chair by the ward window Spartan opened an old text of Fuqua s and began to study Outside a switch engine chuffed its way to the mine It banged into two coal cars and herded them before it like a truculent mother tending her young He found himself watch ing idly mind wandering

He had been through a difficult time After the first few months of drugging himself with labor he found suddenly that there were no more new jobs to perform he had settled down into routine Throughout the long summer he had awakened each morning sweating wretched to face a day full of intense suffering and regret.

The first letters he had received from Tenneville had contributed to his misery a short note from Gus a letter from Milt asking if he should sell Spartan s books and microscope and give the money to Mrs McClintock and a third from Mrs Dunnock which did not sound like that lady at all because there was not one facet of Spar tan s present situation that she could reasonably say was lovely yes yes lovely The mail had further embittered him

In late spring another letter arrived from Tenneville shuffled among Fuqua s medical journals several ads from drug companies the *Saturday Evening Post* (which Fuqua actually read) and a sam ple tube of vaginal jelly addressed to Andrew Fuque M D Stealing away from Fuqua s delighted yipping over his gift he opened the thick letter from Tenneville It was from Milt

Dear Spartan

I m being formal in case you don t recognize the salutation Frankly I wasn t going to write to you at all as I felt it would just be rubbing it in But your mother wrote me about your duties up there and I figured as long as you re smelling the sweet odors of pus and disinfectant you ll get along

We re all getting our internships lined up with yours truly heading for Cincinnati Militant Mac is heading for Iowa or some damn place don t ask me why

I might as well let you have it about Lardass Boswell while I m at it He checked into the boarding house long enough to

pick up his stuff and his nice gun He s out of med naturally as Gus fired him right out on his fat bottom Anyway he s going to marry that babe Though what she or the poor Scientists ever did to deserve our Buddy is beyond me

Frankly I tried to slug him and missed I ran into the dresser and cut my head The other guys grabbed him though and roughed him up good

I called Fane the other day just to check up And he says it's still too soon to start on the Parole Board But he s trying to get up a thing which has to do with a governor's par——

Spartan had not been able to finish the letter then Heartsick he had buried it under his mattress Milt had exhumed him ruthlessly at a time when he had just become resigned to decay He didn t want to read about Buddy and med and internships He didn t want to be reminded, even remotely of Imagene

Yet that night awake and listening to a spring torrent he could not stop thinking of her Turgid with loss or desire he knew not which he flung open his window and rolled his face against the cold wet bars

But on a lazy Indian summer day you can look back with wry dispassion on the wildest of spring nights Idly he turned a page

One of the pneumonia patients wanted the urinal

Again Milt wrote just before Christmas His bride Nancy had vomited every morning for a week bless her pregnant little hide Milt reported Spartan grinned and put the letter beside a rack of test tubes where he would see it to answer it

Then two days after Christmas there came Imagene s card from Dublin On the back was a note saying she still thought of him a lot He flushed the card into the sewage system of Massacre Gap He couldn t remember exactly what she looked like She had rather nervous hands that twisted perpetually in her beads he could recall them vaguely but that was all

Not that it mattered

Maybe he thought he d even take that drink Fuqua was always offering him just to celebrate But what he couldn t have said Grinning he presented himself in Fuqua s office

Hi Spart," Fuqua said c mon in How about joining me in a snort?

v

In the time that Spartan had been at the Gap he had not as yet seen the strap administered although the results were familiar to him The strap was the favored punishment for infractions of the rules with the exception of the more immediate and spontaneous reproofs such as bashing the head and face with manacles fists mine equipment or whatever weapon might be handy

About one prisoner a month had his back laid open in the presence of Dr Fuqua Warden Weems a hand picked rostrum of the more troublesome prisoners and a self appointed board of guards who liked that sort of entertainment Although the laws of Kennassee governing the punishment of prisoners required that Warden Weems submit a report to the Prison Commission requesting permission to utilize the strap this irritating and picayune procedural detail was ignored regularly and quite rightly by the busy Warden Weems

He received complaints directly from the guards listened politely to suggestions concerning the number of lashes the infraction deserved and then made his decision The number was usually in the neighborhood of ten to twelve strokes

In late August of Spartan s second year at the Gap a prisoner was scheduled to receive thirty lashes at the behest of Mitch the mine foreman The grapevine had it that in this instance Mitch who rarely resorted to the strap was being lenient. The culprit had endangered the entire crew working in the mine by an aggravated and intentional violation of Mitch s safety rules And on the subject of safety Mitch was rocklike He could not be moved chipped or dented he was responsible for the safety of some three hundred miners and if it were necessary to flay one man raw in order to preserve the other two hundred and ninety nine then he demanded not requested of the warden that the victim be sacrificed

Strap Time as the appointed hour for the application of the leather was known was set for 7 30 in the morning Spartan had risen just after five and by seven had dispatched the empty breakfast pans back downstairs and was brewing Fuqua s coffee Going through the office he stopped at the desk to paw possessively at the scattered samples that had come in from the drug companies the day before Each pellet each small bottle of liquid each tube or jar was carefully catalogued by himself both mentally and in written

record, and then stored away in the drug room And in the back of every medical journal that came in for Fuqua, Spartan found ads for newer drugs and like a ten year-old during a long summer va cation he sent in coupons and polite letters asking for free trials and literature blithely signing all such communications with Andy Fuqua s name

At least carbuncles were no longer lanced mopped out, and packed without benefit of anesthetic

Fuqua s snoring roused him from his miserly contemplations and he rapped on the bedroom door loudly Hey Doctor It s twenty five minutes to Strap Time"

Fuqua did not answer

Doctor! I ve got the coff——

Oh the hell with it Spartan thought For a man who drank to forget some secret sorrow and who spoke bitterly of life in and out of his cups, Andrew Fuqua still got a mighty bang out of his bouts

Spartan opened the door and clumped noisily to the bed Fuqua opened one bloodshot eye and then closed it, attempting to resume his slumber Gray hair gray face gray mouth—all seemed crumpled as though they had gotten mashed during Fuqua s sodden sleep

Scram Fuqua said thickly

Doctor you re due over at the shed in twenty minutes

Fuqua turned his head away from the light and groaned I really did it to myself this time Get me something Spart

Mentally Spartan made a stingy tabulation of his analgesics Aspirin? he said slyly

'No not—— Oh goddammit get out of here and let me sleep this thing off

Strap Time in twenty minutes Spartan said inexorably

'All right all right then you got twenty minutes to get your self down there

His first reaction was a surge of responsibility and power then slowly he shrank back from the idea Oh now——

sake s I ve taught you almost all I know about medicine If you can t tell when a guy s being beaten into shock then I can t either Now get the hell out of here and leave me alone!

Spartan dragged his protector from the bed and supported him before the wall phone Fuqua hung on him lumpishly licking his lips and groaning Warden? he said listlessly into the mouthpiece

"Sending McClintock down Strap Time G night" He was snoring in fits and starts before Spartan lowered the shade and left the room

He had seen the prisoner to be punished on his infrequent exercise walks with the messhall gang He had impressed Spartan as being a loud mouthed lout Now watching the prisoner being manacled to a post in the shower shed he saw him as a human being and strove to see him only as a future patient The man s back was dirty he noticed with a frown Somehow it seemed beneath the innate dignity of any man lout or no to be strapped while in an unclean condition The blood should have a clean skin to flow down

His fellow prisoners for whom the strapping was supposed to be a deterrent peered at him curiously in his lab coat. One or another of them had received Spartan s attentions in clinic and found him a quick man with the needle a characteristic which those suffering from fractures burns and tears and cuts found admirable

Warden Weems was scowling at him Don t see why Fuqua had to send you it seems like Why couldn t Fuqua attend?

"He s ill Spartan said briefly

"Oh I m sure Weems s sneer seemed to have been splattered against his face by a doughy hand

Mitch too was doubtful. Lissen he said to Spartan I don t want the guy killed now He s a tough egg but I don t want him hell do you know what you re doing? He kept his voice low so that the prisoner cuffed to the post and the others could not hear

I ve already announced that he s getting thirty Weems said coldly You can t change your mind now Mitch McClintock, here can keep an eye on him He gazed at Spartan disparagingly I suppose

A guard stepped forward with the toy-soldier precision of the most outstanding lad in a military school With the exception of each and every prisoner at the Gap everyone loved this Red Davies With his jolly red face and brick-colored hair he was almost the mascot of the Gap He was a master humorist, his quips and sallies having that indispensable ingredient—they were always at someone s expense The faces of the prisoners were stone as he swaggered past them strap in hand

His own face immobile hand tight about the stethoscope in his

pocket Spartan thought It *would* be Davies who did it He felt suddenly a fellowship with the brutalized wrecks lined opposite him Despite the limited freedom allowed to him in the infirmary he was still a prisoner a clod in a white coat as the men facing him were clods in faded blue cotton

The strap was leather possibly a quarter inch thick and about two wide Holding it ready Davies looked at Weems who nodded

Try and keep your elbow straight Weems said perfunctorily

Mitch opened his mouth but the first blow of the strap silenced him

One Warden Weems announced in a bored righteous voice Two

Except for a gasp at each stroke the prisoner was silent A line of blood like a mark made by a pen dipped in red ink appeared on the quivering back

Stroke on stroke this was how those dozens of shredded backs Spartan had seen were produced This was what Andrew Fuqua stumbled drunkenly from his bed to observe This was what a man who called himself a physician watched without ever once attempting to prevent

Twisting the clammy bell of Fuqua s stethoscope in his hand Spartan said aloud in his mind Andrew Fuqua I hold you directly responsible for this

By ten the back was smeared and squashy and the shed began to close in pressing down on them with its sounds of counting the panting of Davies and the bubbling gasps of the prisoner When the prisoner rolled his head the great cords of the neck stood out and his eyeballs protruded as if in surprise that such suffering could exist Each stroke took him again unawares unprepared

At the seventeenth stroke the strap landed below the waist whapping against the prisoner s cotton pants and curving around towards the groin The prisoner screamed for the first time rising on his toes then sank turning slowly upon his crumpled suspended body

Hold it! Spartan shouted

Weems and Davies the strap curling on the floor between them like an exhausted tongue stared at Spartan Mitch sighed deeply

I think that last might have hit a vital organ Spartan said recognizing the authoritative voice as his own

"This doesn t concern——" Weems began uncertainly as Spartan went towards the post

The sagging prisoner lolled his head on his shoulder to look up at Spartan Panting slowly through a slack mouth his stare grew porcelain, as impersonal as a pair of artificial eyes laid upon a table That s all for today Spartan thought, and heard himself saying it aloud.

"Only seventeen——" Weems started

"It s enough" Mitch said suddenly "if the doctor says so" He wiped his profuse brows and implacably turned his back on the warden

The situation had slipped from Weems s hands entirely A guard was unlocking the fainting prisoner from the post Another was lining up the spectators for their return march to the mine and Spartan was saying "I ll need a couple of men to carry him upstairs Easy—I don t know how bad off he is—— While his head rang with Mitch s matter-of fact declaration *If the doctor says so*

Fuqua blew on his coffee and gazed at Spartan listlessly "What are you getting overheated about this time?

"Well I can t be sure of course " Spartan studied his nails "But I catheterized the guy and got just a few drops of blood stained urine I think there s an intraperitoneal rupture of the bladder"

Oh come now!" Fuqua continued his absorbed contemplation of his coffee Maybe I d better have a look at him though God my head!

"We ought to send him to Tenneville Spartan said.

Fuqua laughed Oh you bet Send him to Tenneville with his back in ribbons and a note pinned on his fly Please do a pyelogram on me signed Warden Weems

'Then we ll have to do a suprapubic cystotomy"

There was no answer He looked up finally to meet Fuqua s mocking gaze 'This your day to be Spartan McClintock Boy Physician?"

"Why? Spartan said in stiff surprise Why do you——"

Fuqua was oddly angry Look suppose you let me make the decisions around here When I want your opinion I'll ask for it"

"Then let me ask you for yours! What do you want to do about this guy?"

"Do you mind if I drink my coffee first and then make my own examination?"

Spartan fumed He rose and went to the desk where he began pawing among his samples From the corner of his eye he watched Fuqua splash alcohol from the beaker into his coffee The beaker rattled against the cup and caused some of the coffee to slop over into the saucer Ostensibly reading a pamphlet gaudily illustrated with a colored representation of the heart Spartan watched and when Fuqua lowered his head to the cup rather than risk raising it to his mouth some as yet unknown decision gathered on the horizon of Spartan s mind like a thunderhead

Abruptly Fuqua was himself again "Trouble with you he said "is that you ve never seen anyone get the strap before

You mean, you re used to it," Spartan said boldly A couple of more times and I ll be bored as all hell watching somebody get tortured——

Balls Fuqua said blandly "I may not like it either But I don t come bellowing up the stairs——

I loved it!" Spartan yelled truculently I loved every minute of it. My God how can anyone see a thing like that——

Will you stop bellowing! I m telling you don t get in an uproar about it! You just happened to hit a rough one right off and he deserved it You ve seen the results of the rest you know for yourself the effects are hardly permanent

Well there are a few scars of course Visible and invisible You think I m reacting this way because it could happen to me Perhaps that s true you drunken slob as far as it goes But I want to stop strappings because I m a prisoner *and* a physician I m almost as competent, and certainly a more reliable physician than you are right now

But he said only Maybe not and returned to the pamphlet He felt Fuqua s puzzled gaze and said to it inwardly You d better stare Because I ve just decided to take over Andrew Fuqua M D Not yet not just yet there are still a few bits of information floating around in the alcohol that I have to fish out But after that I m going to put you out to pasture and I know exactly how I m going to do it I m not going to ask you if I can do something if I feel competent to do it I m going ahead without consulting you either way You ll still have your vanity and as far as you re concerned it will be intact at

all times I know you won t mind So get on with your sousing you wallowing swine I ve got a practice to attend to

Aloud he said "Will you want me to take clinic this morning?"

Fuqua stood up and abruptly sank down again He grinned but his bloodshot eyes were apprehensive "Hell yes If I ve got to do a cystotomy today I'll have to get a grip maybe I d better take a look at that prize exhibit of yours "

Another cup of coffee before we get started?" Spartan said dif fidently

"I could use a cup How about yourself?

I'll take mine later "

In the diet kitchen he rinsed out Fuqua s cup and refilled it Al though he was excited he noticed with satisfaction that his hands were steady He had never done a cystotomy but with Fuqua at his side he couldn t go too far wrong It did not rankle that he was still dependent on Fuqua s presence He had plenty of time to take the scalpel from Fuqua s hand the responsibility of the infirmary from his shoulders and the last bit of information from his mind— years of time eighteen of them a lifetime of them

He whistled softly as he carried the coffee back to the littered office

vi

His mother at her most recent semiannual visit had told him he was growing thin He nodded absently at the time more concerned with her news Maude ironically was financially more secure than ever before in her job as housekeeper for the Reverend Gates but the Boswells had been ruined by the Depression Imagene and her bank teller husband had retreated to Ole Man Boswell s farm while Buddy and his family doubled up with the senior Boswells Only the small hardware store was left, and it was tottering

and you re too thin she was saying positively He caught on her face an expression his grandmother used to wear for week-days a purse mouth snappish good nature It was as if he were seventeen again and a freshman in college away from home for the first time He wondered how her mouth would look if he told her of the life in the Gap

The strap the men who slaved in the mine until they were felled

by pneumonia or the numerous accidents that Mitch seemed unable to prevent the grafting of Warden Weems on the food budget and the fund for Mitch s equipment and even the drug room fund until he Spartan had wheedled Fuqua into requisitioning drugs to the hilt every fiscal year the cruelty of the guards—his coarse black hair had long since covered the scar on the side of his head so she didn t know about that and the homosexuality the blatant perver sions with the men in the Gap it s sex pure and simple and you either take it in whatever form it comes or do without And in case you re worried I ve done without although I m willing to admit that five sixths of the Gap thinks that Andy Fuqua and I are—to put it delicately—lovers But I m not displaying my virtues, I m stating a fact Andy s sex comes in a gallon can of alcohol and mine come to think of it whatever did happen to my sex drive? Like that toothbrush of mine that disappeared a couple of years ago—I never saw either of them again

All right I ll eat more he promised her smiling

That night he dutifully ate a double helping of beans for supper and suddenly noticed that the hand holding the spoon was in fact, quite thin An inventory of the work he did medical and menial suddenly slid through his mind

He presented himself in Fuqua s office Fuqua looked up from the *Saturday Evening Post* his face slightly lopsided as though one half grew drunk more rapidly than the other

I ve decided what I want for Christmas Spartan said

Fuqua marked his place with a finger thrust between the pages of the magazine and reached for one of the three beakers beside him He poured from that one into the smallest of the set and then poured again from its mate

How can you tell which is alcohol and which is water? Spartan asked

Fuqua grew owlish Wha s difference? I pour half en half enny way

Oh

Downing his colorless hooker Fuqua extended the beaker at Spartan sitting clear across the room at the desk Have a snort

Spartan found his grin From here?

Fuqua missed it. Lowering the beaker he gazed fondly at the

film of alcohol running down the smooth sides "Created He man," he said philosophically "and then created He alcohol As an apologestic jester"

"An apologetic gesture" Spartan corrected him politely

Slamming the beaker on the table and wagging his gray head Fuqua cried No I mean an apologester! Get it? Apologester meaning an apolo——"

Spartan cut in loudly "Guess what I want for Christmas?"

Fuqua became waggish A woman?

Unruffled Spartan pretended deep thought. "What for?" he finally asked innocently Then his words collided with Fuqua s as he rushed on "No seriously Doctor I ve got to have someone up here to help me What do you think?"

No woman" Fuqua said sadly "Did I ever tell you about my wife? She left me Helen—Helen left me" He brightened suddenly "As an apologesture you might say for driving me to drink. Spartan sighed, having heard this before

He had long since divested himself of the fatuous notion that Fuqua drank because his wife left him On the contrary it was more likely that Helen had declined to serve a life sentence with a drunken Andy It was on the tip of his tongue to ask Doctor why do you drink? when Fuqua suddenly volunteered the information

"Know why I drink this stuff? Because I like to drink, that s why Why go through life sober when you can make the trip e-ee——"

Inebriated Spartan supplied.

"No—that other word One means state of feeling good"

"Euphoria?"

'Yee—ahh! Fuqua let his magazine slip to the floor although his thumb still extended stiffly as though marking his place "I was a Bap—— Bap—— Mesh—— Epis—— Hell, think of a religion I can pronounce will you?

Fuqua you worthless impossible drunk, I like you after all Spartan thought wryly "Try Catholic

"Thank you I was a Catholic minister s son" Fuqua said enunciating sturdily "And do you know what they did? The parish—the parishneers? Without waiting for an answer he plunged down the rocky slope of his recital " Got up a fund to send me to med school." He laughed uproariously "They wanted me to come back

and practish on them They even had a wife waiting for me A cold fish Helen A very cold piece of fish—— He saluted Spartan cockily with the beaker "But what the hell I was impotent mosta time ennyway!

Abruptly he burst into song

My father s a poor missionary
He saves young ladies from sin
He ll save you a blond for a dollar "

Spartan ached with loss In his mind he could see Milt Salpinger standing by Mrs Dunnock s piano singing carols in his sweet tenor And later at the speakeasy beer parlor singing this same ditty Fuqua was rendering God I m as full of memories as an abandoned woman he thought ruefully Outside the window he could barely see the guard towers through the flurries of snow Christmas

He stood up and approached Fuqua I ve decided to take you up on that drink

They sang I'm Only a Poor Medical Student together Spar tan shushing Fuqua occasionally so they would not disturb the pa tients in the ward

Spartan got his Christmas present He was running a urinalysis in the lab that Christmas morning when Fuqua beaker in hand and a satisfied smirk on his face presented himself at the door In here" he said to someone behind him Doctor McClintock will show you what to do Fuqua fled before Spartan s sunburst of prideful embarrassment leaving a huge Negro floundering uncertainly in his wake

The Negro attended Spartan reflectively the welcoming smile Spartan was bestowing on him seeming to confound him as much as the microscope the shining glassware and the rest of the lab equipment

What s your name? Spartan said

"Lincoln Andley" The teeth revealed through the generous mouth gleamed briefly before being closed away again in their black velvet jewel box

Spartan set the sample he was heating in a rack and rose All right Andley I'll show you around

The Negro made a brushing gesture with his hand "It s just 'Lee' Doctor"

What?"

"My name Lee"

"I thought——" He was wondering whether there would be a white coat around large enough to fit this hulking creature

My first name s Lincoln and my last s Lee" The Negro seemed apologetic that he was causing confusion but there was about his manner an air of weariness as though he had explained all this too many times before to too many people My middle name is And" he finished in a rush. 'Lincoln And Lee That s my name Doctor"

Spartan tried not to laugh coughed and looked up to find Lincoln And Lee exhibiting a grin so brilliant that it seemed as though the Negro had just invented the expression

How long you in for Link?"

'Forever suh" Lincoln said cheerfully

Briefly Spartan wavered inwardly but the fierce pride that masqueraded as humility in his make up forced him to admit to Lincoln immediately that he was a prisoner also Me *too he said* casually "What are you in for?

Lincoln exhibited a momentary grave dignity Murder He was messing with my wife when I was away" Having said thus simply all he knew of love jealously and insane rage he did not elaborate

Spartan led the way into the ward "And what kind of work did you do Link?

Railroad man Doctor Lincoln now had a quiet pride I was a Pullman porter

Hot damn! Spartan exulted under his breath Next to a male nurse Andy couldn t have done better Merry Christmas! Aloud he said We'll set you up around here somewhere Lemme see "

"And this Spartan said tersely later on that morning "is a bedpan

Yes suh!" Lincoln replied with a flourish

Doctor Spartan McClintock started back to his lab free of bed pans sheets to be changed floors to be mopped glassware to be cleaned toilets to be disinfected windows to be shined tables and chairs to be scrubbed sinks to be washed scrupulously and mess

and practish on them They even had a wife waiting for me A cold fish Helen A very cold piece of fish—— He saluted Spartan cockily with the beaker But what the hell, I was impotent mosta time ennyway!

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Now who? Link muttered as though he were constantly being sought after with invitations for teas bridge parties and charity bazaars The phone pealed again and Spartan looked up from the scope

Isn t Doctor Fuqua in the office?

He s in Link said meaningfully

Spartan went into the office to find Fuqua dozing in his chair an opened book rising and falling on his chest He twitched in somnolent exasperation as the phone called out again

Spartan answered it. "Infirmary

It was Mitch sputtering in a combination of anxiety and rage A guard had been injured in the cave in—Red Davies to be exact. They were bringing him up to the infirmary on a litter

"Tsk tsk Spartan said Now isn t that a shame!

When they had placed the unconscious Davies on the examining table Spartan looked him over

Well? Mitch yelled

Fuqua who had come to stand with a magnificent unconcern on the other side of the table said bluntly As far as we can tell, he s only got a bump on the head and a dislocated arm

Not his strap arm " Spartan interspersed dryly

Gorillalike Mitch ran a hand through his mass of hair as though searching for lice He gazed down at Davies in a dark bemusement I wish the hell he said slowly he d been killed Then maybe Weems would listen to me Someday a lotta men are going to get killed down there Oh godammit He turned and stumped from the room frustrate with disgust

His job Fuqua said would drive me to drink Get the chloroform will you pal?

Why? Spartan said Let s do it without—maybe he'll come to

Oh tut tut Fuqua said Don t be so bitter Go on get it

When Davies reported back to work he was assigned to the infirmary Very shortly his spittle-dabbed mouth his slack grin his merry dancing eyes and even his name became an anathema to Spartan During clinic Davies did not loll at the desk in an ennui of unconcern as the other guards had done Instead he watched all proceedings with an avid glow should any of them prove to be painful Spartan used anesthetics prodigally, even to doling out straight shots

from a beaker like Fuqua s It became a gruesome game with them Spartan trying in every way to prevent pain or at least its exhibition and Davies looking on and scoring a point whenever someone so much as winced

At last Spartan took his indignation to Fuqua Fuqua shrugged What goes on out at that desk is none of my concern

Well I m sick and tired of having to stand between that sadist and the patient Spartan protested I swear to God his eyes glisten and he breathes loud

So what? It doesn t hurt the patient any more or any less just because Davies is getting his kicks out of it

Try working in the clinic yourself sometime Spartan thought angrily You re never off your ass any more except to urinate or get another gallon from the drug room You mean having someone slobber with delight every time you reach for a knife wouldn t bother you in the slightest? Spartan said righteously

Fuqua slammed shut the book he had been reading and his eyes grew cold Don t ask me to unburden my sensitivities to you please And stop sounding so demanding

I am demanding I m demanding that Davies be removed from that desk!

Fuqua seemed immobilized for a moment not even breathing as though posing for a stern and awesome portrait of himself Then as if anger were an emotion requiring too much of an effort to sustain he smiled in a detached way Don t be such a prig Spart

But anger always made a nag of Spartan Well he ought to go back to the mine There s not a thing wrong with him That shoulder mended long ago He ought to be reported to the warden

Fuqua made a pretense of returning to his book

"If he s using convalescence as a feeble excuse not to go back I ll——

You'll do nothing Fuqua said pleasantly looking up from the page And since it has slipped your mind increasingly these days let me remind you that you are a prisoner here And as such the assignment of guard duties does not concern you Possibly it might concern me but usually Warden Weems and Mitch take on the onerous burden

And just to ram it in and tamp it down good let me also remind *you that as a prisoner here you have about as much to say about how*

I run this infirmary as Lincoln And Lee does" Fuqua smiled thinly "I hope that s clear?"

"Very" Spartan said He left the room

In the end it was Fuqua who negotiated a truce but whether his sudden capitulation arose from friendship or sheer inertia Spartan could not decide at the time It was June by then and Spartan who had passed his twenty ninth birthday had sulked purilely for over a month

He had made the lab the refuge to which he retired in spare moments to catch up with the journals or to study Rarely did he read anything else but medicine—a habit most physicians form early in their careers (He observed with condescension Fuqua s growing proclivities in the way of books magazines and newspapers and himself glanced at a newspaper as infrequently as weeks apart.)

The lab had an advantage other than quietude as a refuge for in the summer months only the north or east side of the wooden infirmary was bearable in the afternoon Fuqua s quarters occupied the northeast portion of the building and the lab and ward east and southeast, respectively

On this afternoon Spartan coatless and with rolled sleeves was studying in the lab when he heard his name called Reluctantly he recognized his summons back to the *sanctum sanctorum*

He presented himself in the office doorway and entered the room as far as the desk. "Yes Doctor Fuqua?" he said formally

Fuqua sat amid a litter of newspapers his feet propped up on the table In one hand he was holding the Tenneville *Times* opened to the editorial page and in the other a coke hi ball choked to the brim with real ice 'C'mere I want you to read something"

Spartan approached stiffly carrying within himself a very brittle sense of dignity 'What do you want me to read?" he asked in a tone that was overly polite as he took the paper

"Oh climb off it, Fuqua said cordially "You ve played Jesus long enough around here

Why Spartan asked himself resentfully does everyone say that to me sooner or later?

Read the bottom part of the editorial Fuqua was saying "And for God s sake sit down You don t have to stand there at attention."

leaned forward curiously A figure with hair sun bleached the color of buttermilk lay front down on the litter One hand hung listlessly the other was crumpled nervelessly under the cheek as though some one had placed it there But it was the area of the buttocks that drew the gaze for the faded cotton was now in the shadow of after noon almost black with dried blood

Still Spartan did not comprehend

He turned to the day guards at the desk beyond the barred door of the clinic 'They re coming now—get the door open

A guard rose curiously and opening the door wide came to join him at the window His face arranged itself into horror as he looked out Oh Christ Christ how many of them did it take to do that? The procession disappeared around the side of the building and he went out to murmur something urgent to his partner at the desk Spartan followed him out and when the patient appeared at the bend of the stairs he saw that the pretty face bore a downy white mustache amid the black bruises The eyes were wide open though the boy was unconscious

When Spartan had cut the cotton pants away and seen the but tocks purple with bruises and red with bloody gouges the anus ripped shredded and oozing bubbles of blood he said to Link in a tight voice Get Doctor Fuqua in here right away!

The prisoners who had brought the boy in wanted to leave but their guard stood transfixed

Where did you find him? Fuqua said coming in through the door

Back in one of the shafts He s new here and I got to wondering where he was So I went and there he was lying with his eyes wide open just like that. But it coulda been any number of them who done it

Yes Fuqua said Any number He swayed and put a hand to his forehead All right get out of here we ll take over And when they had gone he said simply Spart? He looked as though he were in pain

Sure Spartan said He felt himself taking over yet oddly not wanting to give orders to Fuqua Look—Link can handle the anes thesia so maybe you could type his blood——

I ll do that" Fuqua said At least I can do that.

Link leaned over and wiped the sweat from Spartan s forehead then bent back over the chloroform mask. In the oppressive heat Spartan s hands slid wetly in his gloves and his body closely gowned, felt bloated. "Wipe me again " he said when the sweat threatened to run into his eyes

Link did not comply

Spartan looked up angrily "Link, wipe——" Link s eyes were signaling him steadily

Leaning against the door frame was a grinning Red Davies

"Get out," Spartan said

The grin grew less winning faded "Lissen you I'll *give* the or ders not take them from a——"

Spartan raised his voice "Do I have to yell for Doctor Fuqua?"

Davies made a sound with his mouth and pushed himself away from the doorframe "Or maybe he said blandly "you got Fuqua to do it for you "

Through a rage that reared to vertiginous heights he heard Link s voice crying up to him thinly "Doc take it easy! Doc "

Then as Davies turned to leave he said in a voice that did not sound in his head like his own Wipe me "

The night stayed hot, and from his cot Spartan could hear Link threshing about and sighing to himself in his own cubbyhole off the ward He got up restlessly and stood at his window looking out through the bars Dim lights came from the towers along the cyclone fences and even fainter ones from the long dorm sheds but for the main the world was white with moonlight. Encircling the Gap like massive sentinels the ridges and knobs raised themselves black against the night Just below him the train tracks wandered about aimlessly like the shining track of a snail

This place is beautiful he thought and a longing that desired no person or material thing came over him It was like the thirst not of the dry throat or crusted mouth but of desiccated tissues deep thirst.

I know what I want—I want my life back. But like some half finished book it had been carelessly mislaid or lost somewhere in yesterday He would never know how it came out now

The moon had gone down when the howl awakened him At first he dreamed briefly half asleep that his dog had come back and was baying for him—the one Grandma wouldn t let him keep But the

ululation continued ascending the arc of the night and growing high and shrill

He groped for his flash and stumbled to his feet Link padded past the door and they almost collided in the dark whispering urgently The T B ? No the other one

Spartan sped into the drug room unlocking it with the key hung about his neck He switched on the light and snatched up needle and morphine

When he got back to the ward Link had turned on the paper shaded light in the corner Black man and white youth were strug gling together on the cot From the boy s mouth issued disjointed cries while water streamed from his eyes The other three prisoners in the ward were sitting up in bed staring half in curiosity half in some predigested ever available fear

Hold him down! Spartan cried He ll rip himself open again "

Link s naked arms bulged I ve got him on his side—— Hurry Doc!

He made a hasty swab on the boy s arm and plunged in the needle Spittle struck and ran down his face as the screams grew high and intense like a woman being violated

At first Spartan thought it was Fuqua who had come up behind him and then he recognized the bellowing voice of Davies What the hell s going on in here?

Spartan clung to the boy and grimly pushed the plunger home forcing himself to ignore Davies

Here lemme shut him up for you! Davies shoved at Spartan and bent towards the bed Then he was falling backwards with the force of Spartan s blow one hand already pulling his gun from its holster As he struck the floor elbow making contact first the fierce pain paralyzed his arm and the gun slid from his hand It came to rest at the feet of Fuqua standing in the doorway

Fuqua bent and picked up the gun Then a weary figure in a frayed dressing gown he stepped into the ward and held it on the room at large Get up he said to Davies and stand over there by the wall

Davies obeyed sullenly holding his injured arm One of the pa tients who had flung himself on the floor beside his cot crept quietly furtively back into bed Spartan felt the body beneath him go limp and the cries sank into a bubbling and then silence

"Link Fuqua said "go ring up the warden three longs and one short and tell him I said to come over right away"

Link gave him one look—brief passionate despairing—and went to obey

"Has the patient done himself any harm? Fuqua said to Spartan.

"I m checking it now No

"Then line up against the wall

Spartan rose from his crouch by the bed Like Link he looked directly into Fuqua s eyes but met only the unyielding stare He went to take his place at the wall

Link appeared in the doorway "He s on his way over Doctor

Moving to the side Fuqua said Go lock the washroom door and then come stand over there" He waited until Link had taken his place against the wall "All right Davies what were you doing in here?

"Nothing" Davies whined I mean I figured something was going on——"

"You were ordered to keep out of the infirmary"

He came into the operating room while I was—— Spartan began blurting out.

"Shut up Did anyone call you in here Davies?

Davies looked crafty Well I did hear someone—— There was all this ruckus going on

"I had to kick the goddamned sadist out of the operating room! Spartan burst out passionately

I said for you to shut up!

There was an irritable murmuring from the hall and then Warden Weems appeared blinking in the doorway Both he and his accompanying guard gaped at the sight of Fuqua and the rest of the ward

"What is all this? Warden Weems demanded indignantly

Fuqua surrendered the gun to him I came in here to find McClintock fighting Davies away from a patient

Fighting him *away* Weems said querulously Doctor Fuqua you ll have to be quite explicit, you know He surveyed Davies noting the bruised face where Spartan s fist had landed A prisoner striking a guard "

"Davies was interfering Fuqua said in a cold precise tone "I've told him to keep out of my infirmary unless I call him Then to

night I come in to find him yelling at a patient and attempting to——"

Which patient which patient? Weems said as though Fuqua were going too fast for him

The one who was beaten and had his anus ripped open in the mine this afternoon Fuqua said adding deliberately McClintock operated on him earlier this evening

Weems shot Fuqua a questioning glance and frowned 'Yes " He looked at Spartan thoughtfully shifted his eyes to the glowering Davies and then back to Spartan Suppose we discuss this in your office Davies—you wait for me at the desk He motioned towards Spartan speaking to the guard at his side 'Take him to that bench outside the door here and watch him

Like actors following chalk lines on the floor they moved to take their various places in the drama Fuqua and Weems disappeared into the office As Spartan went out of the room a backward glance showed him Link standing helpless in the middle of the ward—a Negro whose word on the matter would not be requested and who accepted with ingrown resignation that it would not

Spartan waited with the guard in the hall Automatically he had lined himself up against the wall and his wet back stuck to the peeling paint The mugginess of the night had reached its peak of intensity and perspiration ran down his arms to mingle with the splotches of blood on his barked knuckles

But at least I smashed that goddamn sadist he thought in sudden exultation At least I got to smash his face in good

The door to the office opened and Warden Weems appeared Let s go he said to the guard 'The prisoner is staying here

Fuqua waited until Weems had gone and the night was quiet Still in his bathrobe he went into the ward and murmured something to Link Then he came back, and going into the office again, said "Come in here Spart

Spartan followed him silently Go ahead give me hell Andy he thought sullenly But I tried to tell you all along what that bastard Davies was and you still wouldn t listen You had him changed to night duty so he couldn t watch clinic but you really didn t take me seriously did you? I was just being snotty

Fuqua sank into his chair and turned the light away from his face

so that it was a gray shadow Searching through the pocket of his robe he brought out a soiled handkerchief and mopped his face with it.

I wasn t going to mention it Spartan said suddenly but that damned sadist did come into the operating ro——

McClintock Fuqua interrupted quietly did you know that the penalty for striking or injuring a guard is usually death? He waited with detached politeness while Spartan absorbed this then continued "However you re lucky I persuaded Weems to see the matter fairly Davies is going back to the mine——

"Well it s about time! Spartan began vociferously I hate to say this Andy but if you d had him sent——

And you McClintock Fuqua said "are getting the strap tomorrow morning twenty lashes"

Spartan s sweat suddenly encased him like a skin of ice

"Warden Weems compromised that far Fuqua went on 'but no further He let the hand holding the handkerchief drop to his knee "Strap Time is seven A M I m sorry "

Spartan continued to stare at him

"I m sorry Fuqua repeated a tone higher as though speaking to someone of very low mentality Now get out of here and let me get to bed

Spartan turned and aimlessly wandered from the room His mind informed him You always knew it was going to happen to you

He got up at the usual hour in the morning already sick with the odor of anticipation before the spoonful of actuality was offered him But he went dutifully to the bedside of the savagely injured boy and then performed his other tasks He returned again to look down at the sleeping boy protecting this stranger had brought him to his own Strap Time But he felt no resentment, no compassion nothing at all for the boy He was merely a symbol of that ideal before which Spartan had come to kneel He was the Patient the Case and for this Spartan would have done the same thing again

I don t regret it he thought And then remembering Davis and his swollen face he told himself fervently No I don t regret it.

Trays rattled and Link s soft voice sounded at the door He came in wheeling the creaky cart avoiding Spartan s eyes I ve got you some coffee brewing Doc he said Yet Link was not pulling a long

face Instead Spartan realized, the Negro was granting him the privilege of privacy

Spartan went into the diet kitchen The coffee was perking sending out its inviting odor But the aroma made him queasy and when he poured a cup he knew he would not be able to drink it

The coffee scalded his hand and he set the cup down It will take only a minute he tried to assure himself Not much longer than a minute and the twenty lashes will be over But the sense of outrage that such humiliation could occur to him could not be rationalized away Only one minute he chattered to himself in a panic and the hand holding the cup on the table shook so that the table clattered as if jolted by a minor earthquake

Fuqua appeared in the doorway looking tired He was already dressed even to a fresh white coat. His stethoscope bulged in the right hand pocket

That s right Spartan thought mechanically he ll have to take clinic this morning—after he takes care of me

I ll take a cup too Fuqua said in a normal voice *Incidentally* how s the kid?

Spartan s mind responded sluggishly The——

The patient of last night s to-do Fuqua said patiently

Oh Spartan looked into his coffee as though lost in reflection He'll live

Yeah After a moment Fuqua said gently So will you

Spartan jerked his head up "I m not moping he said hotly if that s what you mean But I m not relishing the idea either' So if you think that s just too craven of me——

"Craven' Craven'" Fuqua yelled back. What have you been doing reading poetry all night?

Spartan displayed a shaky terrified grin So I m scared pissless Andy It s the idea of it that gets me

I can see your point Which reminds me—empty your bladder before we go over

Strangely enough it was comforting talk It reduced him and what was going to happen to him to the mere details of a case history *Patient received twenty lashes lacerations cleansed sutured where necessary and dressed*

"I ve been emptying it every five minutes" Spartan said dryly "I m like a kid told to go to the dentist after school It seems like

every drop of water I have is coming out of association and forming in the bladder Fear makes an excellent diuretic

Drink your coffee Fuqua said "They ll be coming up for you soon Then as calmly as though he were measuring out a dose of castor oil he emptied half the contents of Spartan s cup in the sink and laced the remaining coffee well with alcohol from the beaker To himself he donated a smaller shot

Spartan lifted his cup and said bravely 'Top o the morning to you Andy' But ignobly some of his coffee slopped down the front of his shirt and part of his effect was ruined

The guards at the desk announced that Strap Time had approached by banging on the barred door Hey McClintock!"

He came out of the ward walking with a rigid pride Fuqua joined him and they walked towards the desk together Then as the door opened and a guard held out manacles for Spartan Fuqua hurried back into the infirmary Hold it a minute will you——

The guard looked blank

I think Spartan said "he had to urinate Then he was less amused as the manacles clicked shut It had been a long time since he had felt steel about his wrists He wasn t a Case or a Patient.

He was a prisoner about to get the strap

The post was waiting for him inside the damp shower shed The prisoner spectators watched closely as he was manacled into place Warden Weems yawned sleepily and nodded to Fuqua

The guard who approached strap in hand was not Davies Looking at the post before his face Spartan knew he would have gone insane if it had been

He discovered that there were teeth marks in the post He had seen men gnawing on their arms also until those wounds needed as much attention as their backs He had heard them gasp sob wail shriek and pant but there were many who had made no sound at all He was suddenly terribly afraid to discover which he would be he sensed that it was more than a matter of control—it was a matter of what you were

From outside came the mournful hoot of the mine whistle and he listened as though it had become the most important sound in all the world

One!

He knew then why they had all worn that look of surprise man

after man had stood at this post staring at it, savoring with slack faces the astonishing incredible taste of this new pain.

Two!

The panic came on him in a rush It was more of an anguish than the pain there was no way no way to bear the fact that he was manacled that he could not get away Not even biting offered the escape—the arms responded no more than the wood of the post Then within himself he suffered a fierce avulsion all reason sud denly wrenching itself free of his mind He was loosened—the pain was there increasingly but he was freed

Someone was counting *Eight nine* Someone was breathing with a terrible rasping sound out of a chest that ex panded and collapsed like a giant bellows *Twelve* the voice said The someone was panting now and the astral voice said *Eighteen*

And someone remarked in a bored tone *Twenty*

He came back into himself to find he was hanging from the mana cles His mouth tasted bloody At first he did not recognize this dis heveled mind as his own Bits and pieces of his personality had been wrenched loose and were lying carelessly about. As he was released from the post he was still wandering about picking up first this piece of pride and that of conviction that certain misfortunes could never occur to him and then letting them drop He would never be able to put all that together again

He had been right though it had taken little more than a minute

"Look at that back Fuqua said in disgust working on him in the operating room Weems really told that guy to lay it on God what a mess!

Stop pitying me!" Spartan shouted close to howling

"Well hell Fuqua said mildly didn t you feel sorry for the other guys?

Spartan rolled his head on the coarse sheet Would you do me the favor of shutting up about it?

"Well at least you didn t yip Fuqua said in a comfortable voice

Link s black hand came down before Spartan s eyes holding a mask "Here Doc breathe deep"

"He s going to scar a lot," dimly he heard Fuqua remarking

For a time after that, Spartan grew unsociable surly retreating into medicine He worked compulsively doggedly careless of the pain of his back which had festered If the occasion arose he stayed up all through a long hot night to perform an autopsy snatching only an hour or two of sleep before clinic in the morning But at least corpses did not get drunkenly philosophical and make such soggy observations as When you think it over Spart there s a Strap Time waiting for everyone in life.

ix

By the time his back had become an uncomfortable memory and a network of white scars like the post pregnancy striations across a woman s belly he had long since elevated himself out of his morass of churlishness Again he came to sit through long evenings with Fuqua while Link hovered in the background rolling the conversation in his warm chuckle like brandy in a glass

But his obsession with medicine remained with him so that at times he was as hung-over from it as Fuqua was from his alcohol Once a delegation of Prison Board members had come to inspect conditions at the Gap and to exclaim over the comfort and efficiency of the infirmary Spartan had stood outside the office openly eavesdropping and glowing with pride By God that was his handiwork they were praising—they should have seen the place as it was before he took over!

Weems leading his pompous visitors back through the clinic had bestowed on Spartan a thoughtful smile Of course his voice drifted up the stairs airily McClintock was a doctor before he came here "

Spartan smirked to himself That s stretching it Warden when you take into account why I was sent up in the first place But I goddamn well consider myself one now

For weeks after the event of the visiting firemen Spartan instituted a regime of spit and polish in the infirmary so petty and old maidish that it had the indolent Fuqua grinning into his beaker and the harassed Link muttering to himself Spartan ran fingers over the tops of doors examined the glassware in the lab with microscopic

acuity bellowed bullishly in the clinic over a needle with a crochet hook that had not been sharpened and in general made an exacerbating bore of himself

And nothing so grated on him as to discover Link quietly sitting by a window studying his Bible while so much as a millimeter of lint lay on the ward floor or the covers of a cot were not mitered in geometric perfection

It was October on a cold day when the rain fell as persistently as though glumly determined to make everyone miserable as possible that he had occasion to go into Fuqua s bathroom In the room beyond Fuqua lolled in bed but he had expressed the thought that he would consider it a kindness were Spartan to bring him a glass of water

In the bath ranged along the tub were Fuqua s empty Scotch bottles the physician s latest amour since the repeal of Prohibition Making a grimace of disgust—he had been piously refusing Fuqua s hospitality—he filled a glass with water and looking up saw himself in the mirror He stood in arrested motion evaluating the dispassionate gray eyes and the face bearing faint seams running from eyes to jaw Now among the coarse brush of hair could be seen the stigmata of approaching middle age—here and there a white shaft I m thirty two he thought You stop being a young man at thirty

Do I get that glass of water or not? Fuqua called out testily

The rain drummed on interminably That afternoon in a fit of boredom Spartan inventoried the drug room He poked stacked tallied and estimated with all the petty exactitude that the over weening civil clerk confuses with creative inspiration Three fourths of the entries in the drug book made in Fuqua's hand were undated Exasperated he had to approximate the dates by a series of loose interpolations made from his own scrupulously annotated entries He discovered gradually that certain drugs had been generously ordered and had unaccountably disappeared

He strode into the office and had at the files Fuqua rousing from a doze watched him lazily What the hell? he asked Spartan all amiability

'The drug room s all screwed up Spartan said officiously

Fuqua seemed vastly amused by his performance

He stumbled upon it then Fretting he waited until after supper and then poked his head into the office with a false heartiness Fuqua was in his old dressing gown and slippers by now with a copy of *Time* to while away this wild rainy night He let the magazine slip to the floor and waved a glass at Spartan 'Come on in the Scotch s fine "

They commented on the weather on the patients and on the conjecture that Warden Weems had found himself a new lay in the village They hooted at themselves for being mental voyeurs—the one because he was locked in and the other because he was too lazy to go out.

The conversation lagged flared up fitfully then threatened to go out Spartan sipped at his drink "What s new in the world besides the Spick war?"

He noticed that Fuqua was assuming his portentous look Spart that war is just the prologue One of these days there s going to be one hell of a war with everybody in it. The whole world s going to be fighting——"

"I won t be " Spartan said comfortably

Nor I I probably won t live to Fuqua broke off to smile mockingly Which leads us into the bush we ve been beating around all evening "

Spartan s chair slammed to the floor "All right, Andy—let s get to it You ve been taking that sodium nitrite yourself haven t you? And the other various vasodilators "

"Yep Fuqua held his glass to the light and added cheerfully Don t forget the liquor Spart A slow but essentially brilliant diagnostician like yourself ought to recognize the remedial effects of liquor "

'Taken moderately' Spartan said a trifle loudly

Oh balls—imagine me taking alcohol moderately "

Spartan struggled with a rush of exasperated affection that made him want to yell at Fuqua and perhaps howl with his impending loss at the same time "Andy for Chrissake s how long have you had angina pectoris?

Ummm Let s see That was the year before Weems had the ice-cream social for the boys in Shaft Number Two No I remember now it was right after the girls from the Womens Prison were sent here to——"

'Will you kindly be serious' How long has your heart been bad?'

Fuqua put his fingers together in a pontifical arch If you must know Doctor I had my first attack about three years ago I don t know what *you* were wool gathering about at the time but I damn near had it right in your lap That was my first big attack shall we say I was having plenty of warnings before then

I m ashamed of myself Spartan said slowly

You oughta be pal What you thought of my loafing around was written all over your sanctimonious pan

You re not being fair Andy You should have told me'

Fuqua shrugged Why bother? Besides you were having fun It took your mind off your troubles to cuss me out privately

Now who s being Jesus! Spartan accused hotly

Andrew Fuqua began to laugh He pointed helplessly at Spartan s angry face gasping and choking with merriment When he had collected himself sufficiently he blurted out Here we sit a convict and a drunk with a damaged heart seriously accusing each other of having the qualities and demeanor of Christ Don t you get it Spart?

Spartan smiled uncertainly through thin lips

you and me Every time one of us gets vain or snotty or just plain ridiculous the other calls him Jesus and gets jealous because he didn t think of the act first You know what McClintock? You re like me you re no damn good either

Spartan opened his mouth but Fuqua cut him off brutally You ve moped around here for seven or God knows how many years now telling yourself what a martyr you are and oh what a big splash you d have made in the world if you d gotten your chance But I ll tell you something—you wouldn t have You see yourself as being the devoted Man of Medicine but the truth is once you d tucked that M D under your arm the last thing you d have been interested in would be medicine You d have been out trying to rape the world forcing it to lie down and spread out everything you wanted because that s the only way you could have gotten along with yourself You re a quack at heart, McClintock—all performance and no dedication You re intelligent and likable—at times—but there s still a yard wide streak in you that s no damn good and every time you do anything that s halfway decent, you re doing it just to prove to yourself that that streak isn t there But it is and we both know it!"

"Are you quite through? Spartan said viciously

"Are you quite through, are you quite through " Fuqua mimicked him He poured himself a sizable drink and downed half of it. "Do you know why I m telling you all this? Because I m going to kick off one of these days and this is something somebody had to tell you sooner or later My God look at the way you came sidling in here tonight! Oh Doctor Fuqua is your heart reely bad? Oh dear Doctor you must, must take care of your heart, because if you don't and you die Warden Weems will send somebody else up here and that guy might be a halfway sober conscientious M.D and not want to take any frigging orders from the great me!"

"Will you shut up you drunken bastard!" Spartan yelled.

There was a quiet knock on the door and Link came into the room "You call me Doc?" he asked reprovingly

Spartan got up and went to the barred window Around the corner of the building he could just see a guard sitting up in his tower The rain obscured everything in between so that the tower was afloat in the wild, wet night abandoned to guarding a world that was not there 'No Link " he said wearily "unless you might want a drink "

"No thank you Link said He stepped back and started to shut the door after him "For religious reasons gentlemen "

When the door had closed Fuqua said thickly "Have another drink."

"Goddamn I will!"

They drank solemnly silently and at length.

Later Spartan returned to the window He had reached that stage of intoxication that leads inexorably downhill from the heights of euphoria into the swamp of depression and maudlin memories The insults Fuqua had so unexpectedly bestowed on him now became an irrefutable diagnosis of himself Andy was right, he was no good because he always wanted to be better than he was self loathing parading as ambition

The bars at the window gradually came into focus and he stared at them gleaming with rain Andy " he said know what a close is?"

" Clothes? Sure Wearum

Spartan rested his forehead on the pane to cool it. "No not that kind. Maybe I mean a keep Know what that is? A prison—a place like the Gap "

"Sure Fuqua said agreeably

Know what I think Andy? I think you re right about me He took his face away from the pane and looked at his loose mouthed reflection There s no keep so secure as one s own limitations he told himself gravely In his head his voice tolled with the same philosophical reverberations that Fuqua s often did

Sure Fuqua repeated in the same amiable voice

On a white night in January Spartan awakened abruptly because Fuqua had said in a cold almost indifferent voice Spart! Moon light lay on his floor imprisoned behind the window bars and when he stepped on the oblong of light it seemed to touch his ankles like a chill mist Without thought obeying some urgency that had spoken his name in his sleeping ear he dragged a blanket around him and padded swiftly towards Fuqua s bedroom

Fuqua was sitting up supporting himself on rigid arms his white face dotted with sweat It was as if he were listening intently and without looking at Spartan he gasped Drawer——

On the table by the bed were the ampuls of amyl nitrite Crushing one Spartan held it to Fuqua s nose

Fuqua gasped again Goddamn he said and fell back dead.

Spartan rummaged frantically in the drawer and found a needle and morphine But the injection was a panicky and futile procedure Andrew Fuqua had found death to his liking

After a while Spartan straightened the bedclothes gently about Fuqua and went to rouse Link

Get up I want you to help me Doctor Fuqua s dead'

He found he was crying

Fuqua had left a will Spartan was to have his books his medical equipment and his watch Link fell heir to a gold signet ring

Spartan and Link stood at the office window and watched the hearse slide through the open cyclone gates

'This time yesterday—— Link began

If you ll read your Bible Spartan snapped 'you ll find something in it about letting the dead bury the dead

Link was hurt I m sorry Doctor

I m not a doctor Spartan sighed and looked at his wrist watch

"Supper trays will be due in a little while Get those bedpans going Link."

"Yes Doctor " Link said firmly from the desk

Don t call me doctor I said' By the way after supper I ll want you to help me move in here "

There was a brief expressive silence before Link said again Yes Doctor

Alone in the dusky office Spartan reviewed his conversation with Warden Weems while Fuqua s trunk and clothes were being removed You ll—uh—be able to carry on until we can replace Doctor Fuqua? Yes Warden but I ll need another helper Oh yes certainly—in the meantime

The meantime was indefinite But it most certainly included that period during which Weems could safely pocket a physician s salary while Spartan ran the infirmary The meantime could run into quite a number of years

He turned away from the window and looked about the shadowed office that was now his and beyond at the stripped bed in which Fuqua had died and in which he would now sleep Then without turning on the lights he went to the drug room and came back carrying a bottle of Scotch He was almost in darkness as he sat in the comfortable chair with a small beaker in his hand

It had taken him almost ten years now the infirmary this office this filled beaker even Fuqua s title were all his As he drank he could hear the watch ticking on his wrist

Let the dead bury the dead But he had inherited one other possession of Andy s He was as lonely as Fuqua had once been—more lonely because he had so much more to remember

Goddamn he said to himself softly echoing Fuqua almost twenty four hours later It was a toast but when he had finished the one drink he took the bottle back to the drug room His temperate drinking had been the ritual of friendship between himself and Fuqua now of course the ceremony had come to an end

The price had been too high

x

Although Spartan and Link were friendly rather than friends there was lacking that rapport which had once existed between the

huge Negro and Andrew Fuqua The third trusty to be sent to the infirmary was a morose old codger who blinked constantly as though he could not grow used to the light of day above ground

As the months went by Spartan became taciturn breathing always in every room of the infirmary the stale air of loneliness He wore a scowl often and his moods were increasingly acescent The prisoners gossiped in the ward Link read his Bible (even his con versational speech was beginning to take on an archaic flavor, as if he were speaking in blank verse) and the new trusty Lew Roanoke muttered to himself continually and blinked as he swept the floors or more often whiled away the hours leaning on a broom while he shuffled uncertainly on the threshold of senility

Spartan created work for himself bustling about importantly The lab again became his sanctuary and he spent hours frowning over his colloidal gold and yelling over the phone to the messhall detail about insufficient ice for the lab icebox Other times he filled out requisition sheets with requests for expensive equipment that were so absurd that Warden Weems came puffing up the infirmary stairs himself *to remonstrate* Although as *Weems asserted repeatedly* Spartan *was* the doctor if only he would be reasonable!

Warden Weems Spartan said once curiously do you remember the crime I was convicted of?

Certainly Weems said vaguely Then he changed the subject entirely for he had climbed the stairs that morning slowly pausing several times on the way to catch hi breath While I m up here I ought to have you listen to my ticker He laughed feebly 'Not that I think there s anything wrong

The warden was correct in his personal diagnosis he suffered only from obesity But Spartan removed the stethoscope from his chest frowning with spurious alarm You d better stay away from stairs hereafter Warden Now I m going to put you on a special diet——

Yes yes do that the warden said weakly complaisant

"Incidentally Warden I ve been wanting to discuss a matter with you for some time now We ve got this place set up so that we re able to keep most of the men in top physical condition——

Oh yes Weems cut in negligently things seem to be going quite——

" but when I have to watch a top physical specimen get his back cut to ribbons I can t help but think of the waste in man hours"

—Spartan burbled along even faster— and that waste is increased tenfold because of the bad effect on morale Now you know yourself sir that some of the strap cases receive serious internal injuries that put them off the mine detail for months at a——"

Weems slid the rump that resembled his much discussed chin from the examining table "Now no' he said with a show of his dictatorial manner 'You forget, McClintock you re a prisoner here——"

"I'm also the physician," Spartan said reasonably And I'm speaking from that——

'Well are you suggesting that I give those tough eggs a slap on the wrist every time they commit a serious infraction of the rules? Is that how you think they can be held to the mark? Now you see here McClintock you forget you re just a——"

We need a new sterilizer" Spartan said abruptly veering away from the topic "A bigger one than the old one I have just the one in mind——

Well all right, requisition it!" Weems said testily "I ll O K the order as soon as you put it before me But I can t read your mind can I?"

The new sterilizer was a beauty Spartan pawed over it possessively now for a refrigerator for the lab he rejoiced to himself He was impatient for Weems s next bellyache or case of the sniffles so that he could bring up the matter of the strap again

The refrigerator was a beauty too It hummed to itself in the lab cold and comfortable though the rest of the Gap simmered in the summer heat From his stool Spartan could hear the trees beyond the double cyclone fence sighing lifting their silver undersides Activity on the tracks was sluggish with only an occasional squeal of irritation from wheels as they were braked to a stop

Under Spartan s elbow was his opened Bodansky on *Physiological Chemistry* Just above his head on a shelf rigged up by Link was Zinsser and Bayne Jones s *Bacteriology* and Howell s *Physiology* —the three he loved best next to Cecil on *Medicine* but recently he was conducting a mild flirtation with Hegner and company on *Parasitology*

The refrigerator shut itself off with a satisfied click and dozed off

for a time Only gradually in the ensuing silence was he aware of Lew Roanoke resting on his broom and murmuring to himself agi tatedly in the hallway

Spartan was annoyed but he could not quite bring himself to yell and order around his fellow prisoner as he did Link Roanoke was after all a white man Instead he called out Trouble out there Roanoke?

Roanoke took it as an invitation to come in and borass Sure hot up here Why down in the mine I betcha it s twenty thirty degrees cooler "

My God you spent forty years in that mine I should think you d be damn glad to get out of it

Nothin wrong with mining boy—I mean Doc I us practically born in one right in good ole Harlan County Kentucky Something wrong with lots of mines but not mining Take this one before Mitch come here Old Man Kuckel was foreman then Man we didn t know from day to day if we was going to come up alive Roanoke leaned on his broom and thoughtfully scratched his crotch with one hand Wouldn t even bother to close off the old workings not him and we thought some day sure gas would collect and we d all be blown to kingdom come Never did though Only bad explosion we ever had was when Mitch first got here Twadn t his fault though he didn t have time to get the lay of the——

Have you scrubbed the clinic yet?

Yep hours ago And a hot job that was' Why I bet in the mine it s twenty thirty degrees cooler down there Last summer this time I hated to come up because the sheds was like walking into overns Course I don t mind it so much now because I been sweating my balls off up here all day but the boys sure do complain something offal

Offal Spartan thought is right You murderous old gaffer He had heard of Roanokes youthful misdeeds Only an astute sheriff had saved him from a lynching preserving him for a life sentence at the Gap instead Now for forty years or more Roanoke had bur rowed his way through life in the black belly of a mountain

Mitch does the best he can Lemme tell you it s a matter of time before the hull dern place just falls in And don t think the warden don t know about it neither Mitch's tole him once he s

tole him a hundred times but all Weems s interested in is getting more tons outa there than any man has a right to——

"I m trying to concentrate' Spartan snapped at last

Wull don t take my head off I was just passing the Roanoke shambled out to continue his monologue for more interested ears his own

The refrigerator took up its humming again The sound became a droning like a fly trapped in the skull and searching for the ears as a way out Spartan stood up nearly reeled in the heat and went to the window He seemed to be waiting hopefully for something and then with a start of reality knew what it was He was hoping Fuqua would call from the next room *Hey Spart c mere a minute will you?*

XI

It was in that spring when he was turning thirty five that Spartan first became conscious of the gobbledegook lettering fad that had accompanied the Depression throughout the land Of N I R A N R A or P W A and the hundreds of others he had read little absorbed less But the letters P P S A suddenly fell on the Gap with all the sparkle and excitement of falling stars The Prison Products Survey Act Warden Weems expounded pompously would not catch Massacre Gap its mine its personnel its facilities or even its infirmary napping Those gentlemen who represented the Federal Government and who had been invited to inspect the Gap by none other than the attorney general of Kennassee LeRoy Johnson *would have their eyes opened as to what a progressive prison work* camp could be like After seeing the roads of Georgia which were one of that state s prison products and the conditions under which they were built the Federal inspectors were going to get a pleasant shock when they saw how efficiently and under what downright congenial homey conditions the Gap s product coal was mined

About the infirmary itself the warden had no qualms Just keep up the high level of efficiency that obtained always and they d have no worry on that score Not to mention the fine equipment the sterilizer the refrigerator the new lights in the operating room the little three bed isolation ward that had been walled off from the big ward and now included also Spartan s old cubbyhole

When s all this coming off? Spartan asked familiarly The warden was abed with the sniffles and Spartan shook a thermometer idly in his hand

Overlooking the dearth of that humility which he considered *de rigueur* in convict manners Weems smiled smugly Oh—shortly Have to do a bit of sprucing up in the mine itself first. But you ll know in plenty of time when the officials are due to arrive Matter of fact—— He opened his mouth obediently partially engulfed the thermometer with his fat mouth and lay back with that look of in ward contemplation that all patients wear when having their temper atures taken In fact he continued while Spartan read the thermometer—98 8° 'the attorney general and several other state officials will have a little—uh—pre inspection tour about a day or so before the P P S A men get here

You mean LeRoy Johnson will come up to inspect the infirmary himself? Spartan asked curiously

A trace of the crankiness that had increased inversely with Weems s decreasing weight marred the smugness of his manner Cer tainly I m telling you this because I want the infirmary and the entire Gap above and below ground inside and out in top condition There ll be a Washington report on us and probably a revision on us in the *Handbook* as well I m ordering you to have your place topnotch After all you seem to forget sometimes that you re just a pri——

I think it would be best for you to stay in bed at least for today Spartan interrupted smoothly Can t have you running around in this damp cold you know Now you re to drink gallons of fruit juices Warden and urinate gallons more Alkalize your system in other words You say we'll know before LeRoy and his hench men are due to pay us a visit?

Now see here! I will not tolerate I m not too sick am I? You re not concealing anything from me like pneumon——

Spartan assumed his heartiest bedside manner Warden for a man of your age you re topnotch Now this has nothing to do with your heart as a matter of fact, I m very satisfied with your all around improvement in the past four or five months

Well Weems said mollified Yes well "

"And you'll let me know before the attorney general turns up?"

Weems pursed his mouth thoughtfully Oh certainly Doctor Just a bad cold—you re sure of that

He went back up to the infirmary bemused with his old bitterness against LeRoy Johnson He built his career on the ruins of mine And after ten years I ve got to look at that bastard s face again He wondered if LeRoy still chewed his cheeks in that semihysteri cal fashion I ought to tell him Mr Attorney General do you know you do that as a suppressed form of masturbation?

The Gap was enraged at the plot of LeRoy Johnson and the warden to hoodwink the Federal men as to the truly unsafe con dition of the mine Lew Roanoke came up each morning to com plain bitterly to his brooms and mops of the stout new timbering that was to be set up only in that level where the timorous officials would venture Hull place would be propped up with toothpicks all Weems would care Just so them Johnny Feds don t see it

Spartan was bored being constitutionally unable to appreciate fully any problems but his own He had been able to cozen what he wanted hadn t he? Then why could not Mitch who was not even a prisoner but an official do the same? And should stout timbering happen to cost more than lab refrigerators the discrepancy was more than evened by the handicap of his position as compared to Mitch s The money was to be had it required only a dissembling smile and a furtive enough hand to extract it from Weems s pocket

What s it to you he asked Roanoke irritably if Weems and Johnson are trying to pull the wool over the Feds s eyes?

Roanoke paused in his task of dusting the office his expression severe Doc mebbe if them inspectors got to see what the mine really is like it would save a lot of the boys someday Someday the hull dern place is going to fall in and we ll be stacking them up in the halls around here—them as isn t dead I seen cave ins And they s about three hundred boys down in there every day counting the guards

Well if they re timbering the place up——

Just one level Roanoke said darkly Just one you see "

Oh Yet later that day looking out of the clinic windows at the mouth of the mine he felt chilled Almost three hundred men buried alive dying and dead in that mountain What could he do with

one operating room and one nurse? And no plasma just his donor list his living canisters of whole blood who would themselves be burst open and draining away down there in the debris He saw Roanoke s point. The poor bastards he said to himself helplessly

Each morning when Roanoke came up from his dorm it could be seen that his agitation had increased Invariably he could be found at any odd moment of the day looking out of one of the windows on the west side of the infirmary that which faced the mine Then one morning he lingered in the office

Doc I want to go back to the mine

Spartan looked at him Why you ve got yourself a soft job up here! Are you out of your head?

Roanoke shuffled his feet peeping at him earnestly This ain t the place for me I belong down there with the boys You could work it if you wanted to Doc You could tell the warden I m too old or something you need somebody younger

Oh now that does make sense Spartan said wishing the old bore would go away You re too old to sweep floors but not to work in the mine

Doc I ve got to! Roanoke s voice was quite flat not demanding so much as bluntly informative

Why?

Roanoke parried I used to be one of Mitch s best men

Look Spartan began impatiently I don t give a damn where you work but it so happens I don t run the Gap And when I ask a favor of the warden it s got to be something important Ask for the change of duties yourself I can t waste——

Roanoke had looked about the office furtively and then gone to close the door When he returned to whisper at Spartan the scrawny frame that sagged beneath the cotton shirt and pants was trembling

Doc that Mr Johnson and some safety engineer is coming over Sunday morning to look at the mine They want to make sure every thing is nice and fine for the others The warden will take them down himself see when the men aren t around to cause any trouble Then the next Sunday after that the boys figure the big guys come around Roanoke s gaze was too bright for once too unblinking he seemed to be judging Spartan with a cold fanatical precision.

Well?"

'One prisoner" Roanoke went on slowly 'will have to go down with them Thats the way they do it, sos there wont be no trap waiting for them"

Spartan listened to an engine chuffing outside the thought that came to him loping off all other cogitations like a scythe He found *himself staring at Roanoke*

"I m sixty-one" Roanoke said meaningfully his keen regard still holding Spartan s "Lots of the boys aren t much over twenty They got families and stuff. So we chose me I m the one to go down Sunday

LeRoy Johnson Spartan thought. LeRoy Johnson and Warden Weems and several strangers What about those strangers? What about the nearly three hundred men who went down into the mine each day? he asked himself

Mitch ll be stopped at the lift, Roanoke said "if that s what you re worrying about."

You re sure you'll be the one to go down? Spartan managed, wondering dimly why in great dramatic moments one always charges full-tilt at the crisis riding on an inanity

Roanoke grinned "Mitch ll let me Harmless old coot like me

How—— Spartan cleared his throat and tried again "How are you——

"Lessen you know Doc the better off you are But we re going to blow that level to kingdom come S only way we can get someone down there to see how the rest of it is Roanoke leaned forward confidently *You re with us ain t you Doc?*

The train had ceased its chuffing and now Spartan heard water rushing through the pipes In the time it took someone to flush a toilet his enemies had been delivered, helpless into his hands

Red Davies he s on duty Sunday Roanoke dangled before him.

But a new warden might mean that a physician would be hired to take over the infirmary Spartan saw himself bending menially over *the sterilizer or rushing the urinals or at best, performing the on*erously dull lab routines he had long since turned over to Link This office its adjoining bedroom and private bath these books the whole life he had so laboriously built for himself in mind as well as reality would no longer be his

You with us Doc?

You seem to forget you re a prisoner here McClintock No Warden Weems, I'll never forget that little fact I ve got scars all over my back to prove it

I m with you Roanoke

He went to the phone and rang the warden s office He complained bitterly about Roanoke s clumsiness and general inefficency I can t train him to do anything he nagged He s used to stumbling around in the mine where it doesn t make any difference But this morning he knocked over an expensive piece of lab glassware and——

Expensive? I ll have Mitch send up someone else Weems said hastily Incidentally I ve been having a sort of twinge of pain in my side and I wonder if——

Of course I will Warden Spartan said I ll come right away, if you like no-o-o—I wouldn t care to guess until I ve yes sir Yes I ll——

Roanoke s substitute came up the next day a willing moron with a strong back and the loll tongued grin of the amiable dog While sweeping the lab that afternoon he knocked down and broke an expensive piece of glassware

Oh, fer Gawd s sake Spartan muttered to himself

XII

On Tuesday afternoon the infirmary had seen the last of Roa noke Now Sunday morning Link and Spartan stood at the operat ing room windows and watched him march along at Red Davies s side towards the mine Behind Roanoke was LeRoy Johnson pumping his legs high (even when walking into the courtroom Spartan remembered LeRoy always looked as though he were running) and with LeRoy were two strangers, a gesticulating Warden Weems and Mitch

Under a scowling sky the mouth of the mine was a dull black even the lights about the entrance appearing strangely to give off no illu mination The whole Gap was a monochrome of gray and there was a mugginess in the atmosphere that caused the lungs to feel com pressed and deprived of air Vaguely Spartan recognized that he was

suffering from apprehension and he wiped his beaded forehead surreptitously so that Link would not see

"That little ole Roanoke Link said quietly so that the guards at the desk beyond the barred doors of the clinic could not hear He s a brave man Doctor"

"Why?" Spartan said sharply taking his eyes away from the procession advancing on the mine "He s just going down with the inspectors to see the new timbering A prisoner always goes along so that——"

Link cut him off with a gentle sigh "Doctor I know something s up You re like an old maid about our infirmary all the time but yesterday you outdid yourself I never saw so much messing around to get everything ready

Spartan looked towards the mine saying softly "I thought if you knew you d squeal To save their lives

"Render unto Caesar Link murmured tranquilly An eye for an eye a tooth for a tooth

The procession had reached the entrance A prisoner came out of the lift and walked a little to one side so that the entire inspection group could enter There was a pause and then Mitch walked out of the lift and went to the prisoner as though summoned

"Good" Link murmured in approval I was hoping they d try that."

Suddenly the bloated figure of Warden Weems scuttled after Mitch Oh the goddamn snoop! Spartan thought in despair always has to know everything The light over the lift rather abruptly sank from view Roanoke was afraid to wait Spartan said in a toneless voice He s taken them down Link

God s will Link said stoically Maybe he s got work for the warden after all

There was nothing to say after that, and they braced themselves in the quiet morning, listening to the slap of playing cards on the desk and the mutterings of the guards at their game

A drop of rain spattered against one of the window bars and gleamed there like a point of light another came Slowly two minutes went by and like the rain then the minutes began to fall faster pelting the Gap with an unendurable anxiety

There was a muffled roar and the floor under their feet shook

slightly A flash of light appeared at the mouth of the mine and was extinguished Then a finger of rain traced its way idly down the window before Spartan s eyes Spartan s surprise was so vast that it verged on disappointment I thought the whole mountain would go up

Now he was conscious of the guards excited chattering as they opened the clinic door and rushed to the windows But he could have told them there was nothing to see Just Mitch running around like an enraged gorilla a stream of guards and prisoners spilling across the yards towards him and a stunned and motionless Warden Weems

Recovered now Spartan was sprinting for the bag Fuqua had left him and crying out to Link O K Link start scrubbing—no first—call over to Four Shed and tell them to get those blood donors up here All of them!

Only LeRoy survived although for a while it seemed as though one of the engineers might succeed in retaining his regurgitated life force just behind his clenched teeth But in the end his mouth fell slack and the life rushed out of him on an expiration of breath

LeRoy would live—bereft of his left arm Though he would find even the act of breathing a difficult and painful matter for many days to come the rib that had punctured his lung would heal as well as the stump that dangled from his shoulder for he lay in the infirmary pumped full of whole blood donated in part by men he himself had sent to Massacre Gap Ensconced in the isolation room almost two days after the explosion LeRoy now lay still ravished by the charms of morphine

In the office Spartan sat on the desk idly swinging one leg and enjoying the discomfiture of one Melvin Wickerly M D Melvin a senior in med when Spartan had been a freshman had become quite a surgeon around and about Tenneville celebrated enough to have been called to the bedside of the injured LeRoy

I was amazed to—uh—find you—uh—— Melvin stumbled into silence

"You were amazed to find me practicing medicine up here is that it?

Melvin seemed to find everything in the room of interest except Spartan s face Well, you—uh—did a pretty brilliant piece of sur

gery on Mr Johnson you know Considering well I mean "

"I d have saved that bastard in there if I had to hold him shut with my teeth to do it" Spartan said breezily and Melvin became even more distant.

Then it came to him Why you goddamn fool Spartan thought What s the matter with you? Everything I wanted you ve got A rich practice important patients a state wide name So you come up here and begrudge me my one little grandstand play in surgery, and my fifteen-bed infirmary and my nigger assistant who calls me "doctor"

He could not imagine even as he sat possessively on the desk flush with his triumph over LeRoy and as serenely in love with med icine as the happiest benedict in the world what he had that Melvin Wickerly M D could envy

"Odd" Melvin commented apocalyptically

When LeRoy was able to talk Warden Weems came puffing up the stairs one hand cupped over his heart as though fearful it might pop out through the skin Dressed in an ancient slicker and carrying a preacher s umbrella he took his seat opposite Spartan at the bed-side Spartan continued with his careful dressing of the stump

Outside the tag end of a thunderstorm crashed about among the distant mountains as if lost and trying to beat its way out Well' Warden Weems announced in a cheery gasp How are you today Mr Johnson?

LeRoy chewed his cheek and glared Great Warden just great How would you be under the circumstances?

Oh when you put it that way Weems brightened again It could have been worse McClintock here worked mighty hard to save your life Doctor Wickerly tells me You almost bled to death Mr Johnson

And where in hell is Wickerly? LeRoy wanted to know Stuck up here with a convict to maul me around my arm gone
He seemed on the verge of tears and had to stop in order to control himself

Maybe Warden Spartan suggested Mr Johnson shouldn t be talking now

Oh Well—anything you——

'My God' LeRoy moaned 'Is everybody crazy up here? I send this guy up for practicing medicine without a license and—ow w—my Christ—what re you trying to——

Relax Spartan said evenly I just had to lift there a bit to——"

Where s Doctor Wickerly? LeRoy shrilled

Warden Weems raised his brows and looked over the enraged LeRoy at Spartan

Spartan went on with his work quietly He had to drive down to the village to send a telegram Mr Johnson You were asleep but he had a look at you before he left.

Digging his head deeper into the pillow LeRoy returned his wrath to Weems I suppose you ve got the ones who are responsible for this outrage And believe me Weems when I get through with them——

Not exactly Warden Weems said cautiously Of course I m conducting an investigation and we ll turn up anyone who was involved besides Roanoke If anyone——

'Investigation! Investi—— MiGawd haven t you done any more than that? Lissen Weems three men died, not including that old bastard Roanoke and I m crippled for life' But you re conducting an *investigation!* Now you lissen to me good! Just because they kept you and that foreman out of it doesn t mean that——

Kept you out of it An expression holy dedicated drifted like a veil upon Weems s sagging face His eyes unseeing met Spartan s *and he swallowed emotionally Kept Mitch and myself out of it* he whispered to himself

Across Weems s forehead it seemed as though the words *Our be loved Warden* had been traced and were about to light up with blind ing beauty For now and all time it appeared Warden Weems had forgotten that it was only his fortuitous officiousness and curiosity that had saved his life

line every damn one of them up and beat it out of them!" LeRoy was sobbing If you don t know how to make them talk I do When I m through with them they'll wish they d gotten theirs with that bastard Roanoke'

"Now just a minute sir Our Beloved Warden said sympathet ically, but nevertheless firmly I ve earned the respect of my men

through fairness and—and—just treatment. This is a modern prison and modern penological methods are used here If there are other guilty ones besides Roanoke I ll find out who they are But I'm warden here and your department has nothing to do with how I run Massacre Gap! I understand your agony and all but I don t even like to *hear* talk about torture and such If there are any others I'll find out about them you can be sure——"

"Oh you crap—you fat, stupid bunch of crap! LeRoy screamed in a fit of hatred and fainted

In the excitement of getting the sweating and terrified LeRoy down the stairs on a litter and into an ambulance, both LeRoy and Wickerly forgot to thank Spartan for his part in the matter Standing by the warden s side in the yard Spartan watched the ambulance ride slowly carefully down along the road

So long LeRoy Spartan said cheerfully and thanks again"

Warden Weems frowned "McClintock sometimes I think you forget you re just a pri——

"You know sir" Spartan interrupted unperturbed I actually think it all happened for the best After all the furor this has caused there ought to be some state funds forthcoming to fix up the Gap in ay-one condition

"Why yes! Weems said thoughtfully "Why you could be quite right there Doctor We do need more money!"

XIII

Yet question and cross-question and fume as he might, Warden Weems never did get to the bottom of the explosion thing And Mitch who was busy bracing and retimbering the operating levels of the mine just didn t have the time to ask the boys much about it. By then of course the beloved Warden Weems had abolished the use of the strap except for the most aggravated of misdeeds and at that he rarely ordered more than five or six strokes

As befitted a scholar of modern penological methods Weems be took himself off to the 1939 confab of the Prison Board and the prison officials Mitch was left in charge

Warden Weems returned, affable and beaming with a present for

Spartan A special license to practice medicine in the state of Ken nassee had been granted to one Spartan McClintock No mention was made of civil rights nor of Spartan s deprivation of them

Cost me fifty dollars Mac Our Beloved Warden said indulgently 'But that s a small price to pay for the rehabilitation of—of——'

One of your former most desperate characters

Oh now Weems said deprecatingly "But I will say you ve developed an amazing insight into yourself McClintock. Most amazing

XIV

Then in May 1941 Weems called Spartan down to his cottage

Doc he said unctuously Governor LeRoy Johnson has just granted you a pardon Congratulations!

Spartan fell into a chair "Thanks He sounded foolish to his ears Well—— Thanks

'And now I have a tremendous favor to ask of you This has caught us a little—uh—short handed and I wondered if you could sort of stay on until I get us a new doctor sent up Now this is entirely up to you——

Sure I will Warden Spartan said

He stumbled back up to the infirmary One of the guards at the desk opened the barred door and looked at him curiously You sick or something Doc?

"No Spartan said in a blurred voice 'I m free

He hastened into the office for fear he would begin to cry

After a while he came out of the shock and wrote a letter to his mother But his letter to her must have crossed the one that the Reverend Gates had sent to Warden Weems Maude McClintock had been killed in an automobile accident while being driven to a picnic and were prisoners allowed to attend funerals or should he go ahead and have the service right away?

She never knew" Spartan said

Warden Weems looked out of the pale green beauty of the Gap absently I m sorry, McClintock. But I ve put in a call to our new doctor and he'll be up today Then you can leave right away He rose and Spartan saw that they were to shake hands "Good luck Warden Weems said officially He had the unexpected grace not to

add the insult about not ever wanting to see Spartan up there again

One other thing Doctor he said suddenly

Yes Warden"

"I hate to have to tell you this That license of yours to practice medicine—it was good only so long as you were here under my supervision. A rehabilitation measure you understand

"Oh

"Your release will automatically revoke it

Spartan turned his head away "Sure Warden It s just one of those——

"Well of course! But with a new life ahead of you! A new start! A bright future! A new start! Weems reverted to official heartiness And good luck to you my boy!

Dressed in an ugly brown suit that scratched fiercely in the warm spring weather Spartan paused at the infirmary office door His successor looked up angrily caught in the act of taking a drink.

"I just wanted to say that you ll never find a finer assistant than Link Spartan said awkardly "I hope you'll—keep him on

"I thought you were gone! What s the matter you in love with this place?

At the barred door to the clinic Link said God bless you Doctor And Spartan looking at him helplessly answered 'You too Link.

You too And good by

2

In late afternoon in the spring of 1941 the Tenneville Express rolled down out of the mountains into Dublin and there deposited several passengers One of them a gaunt man in his late thirties had been the object of some interest during his trip

Now as he detrained and walked without purpose along the plat form he was approached by an obese man whose only distinguishing feature was a foolish grin buried deep in facial fat Hey Spartan! Spartan McClintock! Don t you recognize me? Buddy Boswell cried

Oh go to hell Boswell Spartan said wearily trying to shove past

Buddy pouted Aw say Spart We even came down to meet you Reverend Gates said you d be on this train

Loyal loyal Buddy

"And I was wasn t I? Spartan said, as he walked away

There was a $1000 insurance policy $433 in the bank and the picture of a merry black haired boor with a great mustache and a rhinestone stickpin in his cravat as an inheritance for him In his mother s old cardboard suitcase he packed his diploma from Western the picture of Sam McClintock a new change of linen and a razor and a toothbrush

Where will you go?" the Reverend Gates asked him

"Hell sir Spartan said quietly how do I know?

He caught the express that morning determined never again to ride on this train through these mountains And when they wailed their coming through the haze of late afternoon as they climbed to the lip of the Gap he stared up at the ridge and knobs hungrily search ing for a double cyclone fence that was beyond his range of vision and a squat wooden building with the sun glinting off its west windows

ii

He had nowhere to go and there he went Jukeboxes in Ohio cheap hotels in Indiana whores in St. Louis an army recruiting office in Kansas City a drugstore in Enid Oklahoma a revival in Plain view Texas a rodeo in Albuquerque—where Milt Salpinger had last practiced and whence he and his family had departed for places unknown an Indian girl in Arizona and a gaming table in Las Vegas he listened slept rutted ate got thrown out—tasting them all savor ing none

He arrived in the bus terminal at Los Angeles broke bitter thin and arresting in appearance an unwanted man thirty-seven years old with a foul breath and a severe hang-over

This was nowhere so he decided to stay

iii

He awoke amid the squalor of his hotel room and lay watching a fly as it examined the weave of his coat hanging over the chair Now that the headache and nausea of the morning were gone he was hun gry but there was still the swaying enfeeblement of the prolonged hang-over It was late afternoon and the warm February sun streamed in the opened window He thought of the Gap deep with snow the mine whistle muffled

This time it was dark when he awoke but the fly was still there—he could hear it buzzing officiously about He had grown used to the lost sensation of waking in the night and not knowing whether it were eight in the evening or three in the morning so he lay still thinking about nothing uncaring that there was only twenty nine dollars and some change in his pockets and that he had spent the money he had so laboriously earned in the infirmary and Maude had so frugally saved in creating a wreck of himself

Sometimes they had sent Maude as much as six dollars a month from the Gap—that was when he had not bought even a postage stamp in the commissary during that period My munificent wages he thought, smiling those princely sums

It was at last a necessity that he get a job At least he supposed it was Yet the prospect as all prospects did bored him He was

bored to the bone and filled with an amorphous regret that clung to him like an odor wherever he went whatever he did

He found a job in a drugstore on Vermont and a room on Jefferson Then standing in the doorway of his room looking at the sagging bed the one chair the dresser and cardboard wardrobe he found the furniture as familiar to him as though it were his own and he had been moving it through a series of similar rooms all across the country with him

His hours in the drugstore were from two until midnight He sold things fountain pens plastic toys toilet paper baby food hair tonic decks of cards mineral oil corn plasters For the first time in his life he found the human body disgusting concerned as he was, always with all the salves lotions mouthwashes suppositories pills deodorants and various cleansers that were needed to maintain one body in a state approaching the tolerable

Everyone was talking about Bataan and Corregidor he rarely listened It was not his war Almost each night he read not the news but a series of pocketbook murder mysteries In the morning he could not have told one thing about the book he had been reading the night before

His wages after taxes came to thirty five dollars a week

His day off in rotation was Wednesday and once he took a series of streetcars and buses out to Beverly Hills In the shopping section affluence struck him in the face like an insolent hand War workers and magnates idle women and movie scum wrangled over merchandise their buying so greedy it had all the random avarice of looting He had forgotten that people lived and spent their money in surroundings like this Mingling among them he was plagued by envy and a glimpse of himself reflected in a store window brought him to a standstill as he contemplated his image As well as looking seedy there was something furtive about him

After that the shops the palm trees— goddamn palm trees have pants on —suddenly ceased being objects of impersonal amusement He slunk up wide avenues looking at the mansions with as great a distaste as the few well-dressed persons he encountered on foot bent *on him A yearning without object without form or conscious ex*pression at last drove him back to the intersection of Vermont and

Jefferson Streets Getting off the streetcar he said to himself, Here s my Beverly Hills and I don t give a damn

No more a damn than he had given one brisk autumn day in 1911 when he had first glimpsed the Boswell mansion tucked cozily among the shaded magnificence of Dublin s Mulberry Street

He was vaguely aware of his fellow roomers seeing them only at intervals There was a drab girl who had the room across from the bath and an old man and woman who though entirely unrelated—constant feuders in fact—appeared to be the same individual dressed now in an old green suit and now in a faded cotton dress He avoided the landlady Mrs Chinner seeing her only to put fifteen dollars in her hand weekly

He might have roamed aimlessly away from this life had he not been bound to the drugstore by an emotion stronger than any love he could have conceived at the time He was sustained and occupied by a burgeoning hatred He loathed he thought murderously about the pharmacist at the store This trim man much younger than Spartan wore his white coat with a dash and he was iced on top like a *chocolate cake with a rich brown swirl of hair He seemed to be en*dowed with more teeth than the average and when he smiled he exhibited all but the very last molars In his mind Spartan called this a picket fence leer " The dapper young pharmacist was named Charlie and the lady clerks adored him and vied with each other to attract his attention with the same enthusiasm that they avoided the dour and dilapidated Spartan. Draftwise Charlie sported a romantic limp

None of this would have distracted Spartan an iota from his concentration on torturing himself but for one thing on the side Charlie ran a brisk practice of medicine diagnosing and prescribing the various patent nostrums on which he received a generous sales commission

Charlie was also an expert on condoms diaphragms douche powders and Those Little Pills To Take To Make You Come in When You re Late

When Charlie was in his glass cage compounding, many an elderly crank came whining unhappily to Spartan "Where s the Doctor? I want to ask the Doctor something"

He vociferized for all the store to hear 'There is no doctor here!

The pharmacist can fill a prescription for you *but that s all he knows how to do!*

His working day always sagged after five thirty Charlie s quit ting time Until eleven in the evening Spartan could only mull over Charlie s medical accomplishments of the day and wait with unabated hatred for his exploits of the morrow

He was so homesick for the infirmary that one night he awoke horrified that he was sobbing in his dream Warden Weems was lying on the morgue table saying snippily McClintock you seem to forget you re a pris——

IV

In rotation his day off came on a Sunday and because of this there was Allie

What little he had seen of the drab girl down the hall had been sufficient She was as sallow as dingy as repugnant as this house or this part of his life She gave the impression of being totally colorless although a purple lipstick was always smeared thickly on her mouth and her hair was an unforgettable example of the misapplication of henna Whenever she chanced to see Spartan she smiled showing her one charm—excellent teeth

On this Sunday morning he went down the hall to the bath fully dressed for though he was going to shower he had no robe The other two men of the rooming house the ancient codger and a pigeon breasted creature with a cast in one eye displayed their dubious masculinity at every opportunity by prancing about naked from the waist up because of his scarred back Spartan could not enter into the competition His footsteps were loud in the uncarpeted hallway and as he was turning into the bathroom the door opposite opened as though the maneuver were timed

The girl had on a sleazy flowered thing that hung to the floor and its hem had caught up dust and grime like a broom She gasped in artificial surprise seeing Spartan soap and towel in hand "I just wanted to get some water—— She exhibited a coffeepot

He stepped aside politely and as she passed him he could see clearly the plump shadows of her legs under the housecoat Over the gurgle of the faucet she said as though it had just occurred to her "*Would you want some coffee when it s ready?*" *She half turned to-*

wards him bent over exposing a sliver of bra with the strap secured with a gold metal pin Turning off the faucet she came towards him the odor of violets and sour washclothes drifting before her

He thought with a mental shrug I m going to sleep with this sooner or later why not now? This morning would be as good a time as any He suppressed a sigh anticipating the odors of cheap powder unwashed stockings depilatories stale sheets foot powder Evening in Paris perfume nail polish and aroused female that would attend the ardors of his passion Oh hell he thought no use showering now I ll want to clean up again after "The coffee sounds great he said following her into her room

They exchanged names as he noted the one comfortable chair the rag of curtain half concealing a hot plate a loaf of bread from which slices had tumbled like fallen dominoes a can of coffee and several dirty cups and saucers over which a fly wandered and lastly he allowed himself to look at her rumpled sagging bed The old fastidiousness of the days of the sparkling ward and his own immaculate self nagging always for cleanliness surged up in him He might have left in that moment

matter something on your mind? she was saying and he roused She sat on the bed and smiled familiarly Say you re kind of an odd ball aren t you?

I don t think so he said rather stiffly

After a gagging cup of coffee he enfolded her on the bed with the self admitted intent of relieving himself as quickly and efficiently as possible But as a sexual partner she proved more than satisfactory resisting any temptations to yip moan bite pant in outrageous mockery of his own frenzy or indulge in any of the calisthenics women fondly believe drive men to the brink of madness She was as comfortable as a rocking chair on a lazy summer s day

She stretched and sighed Sort of nice you having Sundays off Mac

Yes He was wondering how soon he might gracefully leave What s Allie the nickname for—Allison?

'That s right honey Hand me a fag off the table will you? She drew in smoke deeply after he had lit her cigarette I don t know why but a cigarette always tastes so damn good after you don t smoke do you?

'No

Like I said you re an odd ball all right She wrapped a friendly arm about his neck And you re lonesome—don t try to lie about it—when you re lonesome yourself you can always tell when someone else is

She was a typist or something like that downtown—he was never quite sure Her last name was Broddus—although he was never sure about that either He knew only that she drained him of his indifferent passion and more importantly of his dreams After intercourse with Allie his sleep was ascetic a strict adherence to unconsciousness alone He assured himself that her avowals of love even when they grew frequent and insistent were mere euphemisms for wantonness If she ever became too much of a nuisance he could always move on

Allie loved to go out to Hollywood and when his day off fell again on a week end he took her out there They strolled the Boulevard looking into the cheap little shop windows while he surmised uncomfortably that Allie was pretending to herself they were married Later sharing expenses they went to a movie and after to a Spanish restaurant where the food was plentiful and inexpensive On these outings Spartan enjoyed only his dinner he was growing to dislike Los Angeles intensely He wanted desperately for it to snow for the sky to drift down on him and instead the earth dried under an everlasting sun that shone through the smog as drearily as the fond smile on Allie s face And more occasionally than he liked the ground trembled and rolled under his feet

After a minor earthquake Allie once teased him as if he were fourteen years old Sissy!

"I hate the damn things " he said shortly "I honestly think I d as soon go through an air raid

"You know Allie took him up conversationally "half the time I forget there s a war on

"Why not? Everyone else out here does "

She turned her vermilion head to smile up at him archly "You know you d look terrif in a uniform Mac "

"I m 4-F he said in involuntarily haste

But Allie was skeptical Then as though changing the subject, she

said idly You never did tell me how you got all those little white scars on your back.

"I was horsewhipped I raped a plantation owner s daughter

Now she was impressed Oh you all Southerners! She giggled Good thing for you I don t have any folks

He decided to take her home to bed, her conversation was becoming obnoxious

By the time he was free on a week day he would be sick of her company and he luxuriated in being able to spend the hours away from her He passed the day in the library downtown catching up on the medical journals and often he did not come home until the bars closed and then he was drunk The next day hung-over and belligerent, he would attempt to badger Charlie but the pharmacist was impervious and went on blandly about his practice of medicine

Then his day off again fell on the week end and he went back to Allie almost as if compelled to demean himself with her

The months dragged on and he lost track of time There were but two seasons in this city rain and smog

As Christmas approached Allie first became explicit on the subject of marriage and then importunate He had secretly decided to save fifty dollars and then leave town

She began to have liquor about for them and they drank together frequently heavily He suspected cunning behind her generosity a purpose But he recognized also that he knew very little about women and so he waited warily to discover her motives As he lay on her bed drunk in the squalor of her room with a drunken disheveled woman at his side his desire for something better—for money in fact—lay inside him accumulative His early feelings of injustice of disseizin returned to nag him

One night after a jaunt to the more opulent parts of the city that Allie loved so well he went into a garrulous rage Who do all these cheap uneducated phonies in this town think they are anyway? Everywhere I look that s all I see—charlatanism Charlatanism and mediocrity and incompetence and all dressed up in a barber s coat like that goddamn Charlie handing out patent medicines to a pack of whining fools Rogues and fools—and advertising Look at you—

yelling about being a secretary when you re nothing but a steno bang ing a machine all day——

Now lis—— Allie began defensively

But you advertise yourself don t you? Just like used-car salesmen advertising their honesty and vitamins their potencies and movies their ahh tistry and churches their damn sermons in neon lights and graveyards their moribundity and correspondence schools their eru dite faculties and medical quacks their degrees They protest so much it s no wonder nobody out here hasn t an ounce of discrimina tion left if it s a lie it s true if it s phony and backed by enough money then it s really worth while and if it s——

Oh get off your soapbox Allie hiccuped and pipe down!

You drunken slut don t you tell me to pipe down!

And who do you think you are! Allie demanded Who are you you drugstore clerk? Even got a woman s job But just because you re a man just because you can knock someone up you think you re wonderful Hell a fifteen year-old boy can knock a woman——

What?

Allie hiccuped Nothing she mumbled

He stood over her looking down at the dark part in the brassy hair How far along are you? he demanded ominously

She muttered something and he shook her to make her repeat it. A snow flurry of dandruff fell to the shoulders of her robe Oh there s still time! she yelled defiantly 'That s what you wanted to know isn t it?

And how many abortions have you had already Allie?

She sulked Four I guess Mac—— Mac listen! You know you haven t got anyone else and I don t either We could——"

Pigs both of us he said to himself releasing her

couldn t get knocked up any more Allie s voice was going on drearily and get married and have a little home somewhere

He closed his eyes Yes in the Golden West Allie Me and my little housewife who thought she d had so many abortions that noth ing could grow again in that battered up uterus of hers

What? Allie faltered He opened his eyes to see she was cry ing mascara black tears

"Never mind Allie you know I won t marry you I m sorry but

I can t even go on with you I ll get the money somehow to get you taken care of——"

"I love you she insisted soggily

"Oh God he announced wearily and drew away from her These women who had the naivete or the presumption God knew which to call their wallowings love

If it s money you re worried about " Allie snuffled the black tears dripping from her chin I ve got some I ve got almost three hundred dollars saved We could get married on that. And then we d get along somehow Money isn t everything Money isn t as important as——"

"Allie money is the most important thing in the world to me " he interrupted gently Without it, I m what I am now People without money become people like us—people without dignity That s hardly unimportant.

She was staring at him and then she sneered through her tears Dignity! That s a hot one I know what you are! You ex-con——"

"All right, Allie " he said 'That s all right "

She began to wail but he whirled on her so fiercely that she subsided in mid swell descending into a pale whimpering Just go with me then when I have it done I ll pay for it myself

Of course I will Make your arrangements and then let me know I'll take the day off if necessary And after that he thought I m going to disappear He was suddenly so tired that he seemed to be sagging as he went to the door

You bastard! Allie screamed You re so calm aren t you? I know what you re doing you re planning to run out on me right after What do you care? Just yourself—that s all you ever think about You bastard You cheap mean sel——

He closed the door on her voice and fled the house His head ached dully as he went into a dark noisy bar and ordered a glass of beer He felt like one of those anonymous creatures who spend their lives lurking in a dark doorway opening onto some back alley

Thursday night he found an envelope under his door containing two hundred dollars in twenties and fives and a note stating bluntly for him to be ready at two on Friday He tore the note into small pieces and then moving quietly packed his cardboard suitcase

When he was done he turned off his light and sat at the window looking up at a luminous sky About the moon there was a wide lunar halo The palm trees lining the street rustled dryly but in the breeze that stirred them he thought he detected the faint scent of rain

Friday afternoon was raw rather than cold with here and there among the artificial looking palms a wintry denuded tree Even in the steamy bus Allie looked pinched and cold and Spartan took one of her hands in his not looking at her experiencing a sour pity for her

Yet the dreariness of the day could not detract completely from the magnificence of Wilshire Boulevard Perplexed that they were riding farther and farther west Spartan said Are you sure you have the right address? We re getting into a pretty ritzy part of town

My girl friend Allie said she went here once I never had the money before It was only a hundred the other times Once it was just seventy five

They disembarked from the bus and Spartan looked up at a sedate building Allie something s wrong A doctor with a practice good enough to——

Oh stop! Allie cried in a scratchy voice You re making me nervous

He quibbled with himself as they rode the elevator He knew that many physicians in town advertised themselves blithely and con trary to all ethics in newspapers brochures and quarter page ads in the phone books but he had supposed that the criminally unethical hid themselves away in some grubby hole in the wall with unbleached muslin curtains pleated across the windows Down a marbleized hall and around a turn Allie came to a stop before a gilt lettered door The simple explanation was there for Spartan to read

HORACE V BOOTMAKER D E M

He pulled her back before she could put her hand to the door Allie what kind of a quack is this guy? Dee—ee—em for God s sake what does that mean?

Will you leave me alone? she cried impatiently You re making me so nervous He s a doctor that s all I know!

He insisted on dragging her a few steps down the hall Are you sure about this other girl? Was she all right?

Sure I m sure! She had hers on a Fri——

"Listen this guy s a quack! He doesn t know as much about this as I—as a practical nurse does He s probably filthy "

Allie began to twist her body in exasperation "Make up your mind will you? I m supposed to be there at three and it s already after Quit screwing around—do you want me to do it or not?

One abortionist was surely as good as another He looked at Allie s pleading face Did he want her around his neck for the rest of his life—this slut and the child she would present to him? He steered her to the door I m wrong Let s get it over with "

The reception room was equipped with sectional furniture Chinese coffee tables and flowers In one corner a receptionist with a gentle face and hair knotted softly on her neck sat behind a desk She was very quiet very much in repose and she wore a sad little smile She seemed to have nothing to do but answer the phone and smile commiseratingly and everlastingly

Seated on one of the sectionals beside Allie Spartan braced him self against the impact of his revulsion for this place She s already had at least four he reminded himself

The phone whirred softly and the girl said "Mrs and Mr Mc Clintock the doctor will see you now

"Did you have to do that? Spartan muttered to Allie but she ignored him and went through the door indicated

At the end of a hallway they were ushered into a paneled room that had the friendly comfort of a den without sacrificing a certain austerity that is the necessary atmosphere of a highly important spe cialist. Behind the large desk sat a muscular man in his early fifties and Spartan stared at him curiously

Please sit down Dr Bootmaker said in a manner that was al most courtly He half rose until Allie was seated casting Spartan a look that was encompassing and in turn revealed nothing Bootmaker was imposing professional His hair was vigorous and dark his firm cheeks ruddy and his shoulders massive If his mouth was weak he had concealed the fault nicely with a manly rather than a male hairdresser s mustache His fingernails were glossed with a clear polish It was only his eyes cold water blue that detracted from his floridly handsome face

Spartan loathed the man on sight—this criminal charlatan who could sit in an office like this and patronize him Spartan with one pale searching glance Even his fingernails with sliver tips as white

as Spartan s had ever been at the Gap irked Spartan beyond all reason

Mrs McClintock Bootmaker was saying writing in a small leather book

Allie licked her lips Yes sir

Your husband has made arrangements for you to go home in——

I am not her husband Spartan said bluntly Allie looked at him stricken but Bootmaker merely nodded pleasantly The arrangements for taking Mrs McClintock home should be made now Mr —uh—— He smiled at Spartan patently inviting him to supply any name that came into his head

Spartan sank into a reserved silence after muttering Taxi

His name is Spartan McClintock Allie said with sudden spite

'Thank you Now then Mrs McClintock suppose we remove that little cyst for you while Mr McClintock takes care of the business details

Cyst? Spartan said too loudly

Bootmaker gave him a pained look A uterine cyst sir A very simple matter to take care of You will find blank checks right there in that box if you need one

"I have the cash Spartan threw the money on the desk

Bootmaker merely looked down at the money If you would care to give it to my nurse she will be right in

What Spartan said rudely does D E M stand for?

For reply Bootmaker waved a hand at the wall behind him A large diploma decorated with many scrolls and curlicues on its border hung there

UNIVERSITATIS HAWKINSIENSIS

GREETINGS to all to whom these letters shall come And be it known that

HORACE V BOOTMAKER

rights and privileges
having honorably fulfilled the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Empirical Medicine

For the first time Spartan smiled I ve never heard of Hawkins University

"Haven t you Bootmaker said rising and going to another door

"This way please Mrs McClintock. He opened the door and spoke to someone not in view "Miss Gaily will you show this gentleman back to the private waiting room please He has taken care of his account, I believe Here on the desk And then come back here if you will please

As though being carried from the fray on his shield Spartan meekly allowed himself to be shown out.

He was taken to a small room containing several soft low chairs a number of magazines and the usual lamps and tables There alone he was settled to wait for Allie He prowled calculating in his head how much Bootmaker made in a year if he did but three abortions a day My God he thought just one a day and in a year a working year of no more than 250 days

Over fifty thousand dollars A Doctor of Empirical Medicine a quack with a high school education if that and perhaps a year s study with some correspondence school—at least fifty thousand dollars a year Add to that such routine charlatanisms as colonic irrigations consultations feeding sugar pills to hypochondriacs

He looked at Fuqua s watch on his wrist Bootmaker was taking his time Did he know what he was doing? Where did you learn that in a correspondence course?

Fifty thousand dollars a year

The door opened and a nurse asked him to follow her They went into a treatment room that contained the table with the inevitable stirrups a stool a phone on a white metal table and little else There were no cabinets no sterilizers none of the usual equipment in sight On the wall was another diploma beginning *UNIVERSITATIS HAWKINSIENSIS*

Allie was fully dressed slumped on the stool her back pressing against Bootmaker s thigh He was murmuring heartily to her as she clutched her purse in white hands Looking up at Spartan when he came in she managed to say I feel funny

"Very brave girl Bootmaker said as though he had been saying this several times and in several ways before You ll be all right now He attempted to move away but Allie sagged so dangerously that he had to stay as he was A taxi he said over the top of her head It ll be at the back entrance of the building He motioned to the nurse and she came over to subsitute as Allie s prop

How—— Spartan began

Bootmaker approached him his gaze direct and portentous In the jolly florid face the eyes seemed all pupil only a narrow rim like phlegm to indicate their pale color If she gets worse call the County Hospital Don t bring her back here I can t do any more for her Don t bring her——

I know all that Spartan interrupted impatiently And then seeing a stream of blood coursing down Allie s leg raged I can t take her out of here like this!

In contradiction the nurse assisted the weaving Allie to her feet. Bootmaker and Spartan each took an arm I feel funny Allie said again Ignoring her Bootmaker began to urge her towards a far door in the treatment room Allie s feet dragged and slipped and looking back Spartan saw she was leaving a trail of blood

Without a word he let her slump against Bootmaker and whipped up her skirt and slip Blood was erupting from each side of her pants running in thick ropes

My God! He swung Allie into his arms and placed her on the treatment table Goddammit what re you doing? Sending her out bleeding like a stuck pig!

Mac Allie said listlessly I m sort of diz——

She needs blood you ass Spartan said Get on that phone——"

Bootmaker whirled him around away from Allie You do what ever you like about her After you get her out of this building and into that taxi I can t get blood so get her out of here

'Then call the emergency hospital Spartan snapped Or I will——

Implacably Bootmaker moved towards Allie Are you going to carry her out of here or shall I push her out? Believe me this woman is going to be out of this building in the next three minutes Once she s in that taxi you can take her anywhere you like He looked at Spartan calculating You seem to know just a little too much about all this for your own good Maybe the authorities might decide you did it

My God she s dying and you stand here and argue about——"
He broke off abruptly and looked down at the fainting Allie

"I will swear that you brought her in here in this condition Boot maker said softly So will my nurses I ll say that she was in such a dangerous condition that I had to call an emergency ambulance to

save her Now do you want to call an ambulance? Or do you take her out of here?

The nurse came in with several sanitary pads and bound them about Allie Under the pompadour of brassy hair her face was gray Life was receding downwards from her face rushing like a torrent out of the mutilated pelvis In a panic Spartan thought, I must not let her die But as if in contradiction Bootmaker repeated evenly I will swear you brought her here in this condition "

"Swear to anything you like! But at all costs we ve——

He found he could not go on The price of Allie s life was his—a price far far beyond his ability to pay He heard his voice sluggish with gathering fear saying "Then we re in this together We re in this together

Bootmaker tried to stare him down All right," he said finally "We can take her to a hotel around the corner I—know the clerk there

"And the taxi driver?

Don t worry about him

I see The taxi driver who stood ready then to swear that he had transported one Spartan McClintock and a dying woman not away from but to the building where Bootmaker had his office

I m sure you do All right, then we ll take her in the back way on the freight elevator You go to the desk and register her in any name but her own—Alice Martin will do The clerk will know——" Boot maker went to the phone and dialed a number "This is Brown Do you have a quiet room with a nice sunny exposure and a bath? Four-oh-six. Right yes *right away!*

I am going to let her die Spartan thought because I am afraid He stood waiting helpless with fear *I am afraid this time I am afraid*

Bootmaker was already forcing Allie to a sitting position Her eyes opened slowly and had the appearance of being sightless

Don t just stand there you! Bootmaker said angrily

Without a word Spartan gathered the semiconscious Allie into his arms The nurse threw Allie s coat over her bloodstained skirt and legs Bootmaker led them from the treatment room through several others and out a back door which opened into the automatic freight elevator At the basement door there was a taxi waiting for them

In the hotel Spartan went to the clerk s desk. I want to register a Miss Alice Martin room four-oh six

"That ll be a hundred from you Bud the clerk said

"Get it from Brown " Spartan said and went towards the elevator

The room to which they brought Allie was on the top floor of the hotel and to the rear It opened on an air shaft and afforded a view of a dull red brick wall The drizzle that had begun while Allie was on the table now tried ineffectually to wash the one window of the room In the gloom Spartan was able to make out a bed, a chair, and a dresser Allie would die in familiar surroundings

Bootmaker was busily packing towels under and around Allie Her legs and hips flopped limply as he carelessly shoved her about her eyes were again closed Spartan pushed him roughly out of the way and tended to Allie himself Then they both sat down to wait

The blood spread inexorably, smearing and clotting on the bedding and towels Once she opened her eyes and looked up vaguely at Spartan bending over her Mac I want to go home I feel so——"

It grew dark all at once The cloud hidden sun had dropped below the rim of the air shaft Allie did not open her eyes or speak again Holding her wrist, Spartan waited for the pulse to stop

Finally it did

Out of the dark Bootmaker said 'That s it Pull down that shade so I can turn on the light Then strip the bed We ll have to wash her of course Evidently he was used to the whole procedure He went to the closet and came out with a pair of soiled sheets Put these on the bed and don t forget to remove the rubber sheet too

They worked silently moving Allie about like a lump when the need arose When they were done she was lying clean but disheveled on a bed which appeared as though she had spent several nights on the soiled sheets The bloodstained ones had been rolled in the rubber mat and thrust into a laundry bag

"And now Bootmaker said evenly it s a matter of myself and you If you blab now you'll get whatever I do Remember that " He started for the door and then paused "I m going to the phone in the hall and I'll have the clerk call an undertaker I don t suppose you have the money for that?"

Spartan smiled thinly "You re stuck with it *Doctor*

Bootmaker stalked out in silent contempt. When he returned he

said We re supposed to have some relative with authority to turn her over to the undertaker

All right I ll be—James Martin her brother"

Bootmaker uncapped his pen and started filling out a death certificate

Hesitating a moment, Spartan went over and pulled the sheet over Allie s face What are you going to say was the cause of death?

"Coronary occlusion Bootmaker snapped

Spartan wadded the money into his pocket without counting it Not a very profitable afternoon for you was it? he asked softly

The florid face swung up and the pale eyes observed him with a detached contempt There is no doubt that it was for you

When Bootmaker looked away Spartan was unable to identify the emotion that came over him Regret, shame—these elements were only a part of it Then briefly meaninglessly LeRoy Johnson s distorted face slid through his mind and he seemed suddenly to be filled with a vast and righteous anger as though an old score had been settled and something left long unattended had at last been done

When the undertaker s men had departed with the money and the body Bootmaker and Spartan parted without a word

Spartan walked the streets through the drizzle until late at night Then when he felt it safe he crept quietly into the rooming house and unlocked Allie s door with her key Under the bed was a dusty collection of luggage smartly printed to represent leather but made of pasteboard Into these he swept up her clothes and belongings his throat filled with the odors of perfume foot powder and stale sour sweat Strangely the sight of her few possessions touched him more profoundly than had her drained lifeless body She had had so little and had died for less

On a scrap of paper he wrote in a neat script approximating hers *I got a job back East* He signed it with Allie s name

He had only to pick up his own single suitcase and he was ready to leave The trip down the stairs was uneventful and he found himself out on the street shuffling through the thin rain under his burdens Allie s clothes would go to the Salvation Army he decided

He hailed a wandering taxi and gave the name of the hotel where he had stayed when he first came to town And in his room—perhaps

the same one even—he counted his money He had thirty two dollars and some change It was almost the same amount that he had started off with over nine months ago He sat on the bed and stared at himself in the mirror

When he awoke in the morning it was still raining Too bad for the Christmas shoppers that it should rain this persistently on a Saturday

It came to him that he had not bothered to ascertain when or where Allie would be buried He had left such details to Bootmaker

v

Dublin was the place for him to go Dublin still and blanketed with the snow that came down out of the mountains He had not the money even to take him there, and it was too late in the year to depend on hitchhiking There were over two thousand miles of jutting ice mountains and deserts and frozen plains between him and home Somehow he would have to stay in this monstrous town until spring Another job in a drugstore another room another Allie

Her name he thought suddenly was really Alice all along. It seemed for no reason almost unbearably pathetic that she had chosen to call herself by the more pretentious name of Allison

At last hunger drove him out to the streets to the Salvation Army bells to the crowded stores to the bars filled with celebrating drunks to the streetcar tracks shining in the rain to the newsboys calling out meaningless words of war to the teeming people to a frantic endless jostle of movement and activity

He walked among them, the collar of his suit turned up against the wet and cold There was a black growth of beard on his face making him appear even more gaunt and haggard and passers by glanced at him curiously He noticed none of them striding along as purposefully as though he were going somewhere hands in his pockets, shoulders hunched forward to batter himself a path.

And then under the marquee of a deserted theater he stopped Looking out at him dimly from a tilted display stand was the face of Horace V Bootmaker Rain had streaked across the glass of the stand to collect in puddles along the base and one finger of water was seem

ingly stroking the precise mustache It was the Doctor of Empirical Medicine himself wearing an unctuous smile he had not bothered to employ for Spartan Above the picture was the message *Health Symposium 7* P M *Sunday 13 Horace V Bootmaker Chairman* Underneath were unfamiliar names completing the roster together with strange and fanciful degrees

He stood motionless for a long time not aware of the trickles of water stealing coldly down the back of his neck In the waning after noon he strained his eyes to see Bootmaker more clearly while an inexplicable excitement warmed him and a scheme nebulous but nevertheless inexorable began to gather in his brain

vi

The rain had gone temporarily and a fog rolled in Sunday after noon By nightfall the downtown streets were quiet the buildings floating in dim unreality above them There was a goodly crowd col lecting about one theater though a conglomeration of unusually vociferous women sprinkled here and there with silent spindly men As Spartan appeared among them a seedy man with a face nicked by a nervous shaving hand his manner at once hangdog and contemp-tuous the women pulled closer into their groups eyeing him dis dainfully He threaded his way through the crowd catching the odor of money that drifted from damp furs and from warm perfumed skins These people were not the penurious cranks he had expected folk reluctant to part even with fifty cents here or a dollar there for cheap pills and salves

Inside he scrambled to a seat up front and sat computing the size of the house Only here and there was there a derelict as shabby as himself a thin neglected spinster or a frustrated ulcerous clerk And their presence was more than compensated for by a generous sprinkling of the hopelessly rich hopelessly frightened hopelessly ill unfortunates who were patently spending their remaining days in a panicky disorganized search for the Panacea

The main body of the audience he instinctively dubbed the Faith ful They were the noisy ones moving jerkily down the aisles in little groups stopping constantly to greet one another in the loud assured accents of the comfortable middle class They were the ones who took their seats with the same familiarity with which they pre

empted the easy chair in their living rooms Even the balcony was filling with them now and watching the crowd hearing their enthusiastic chatter about the coming speeches he felt a thrill of vicarious avarice They were glowing with eagerness impatiently waiting for someone to tell them of some new way to spend their money

The subconscious recognition of opportunity that had disturbed him when he was reading the announcement of the symposium was justified He felt a desperate sense of deprivation sitting among these secure people and he suddenly acknowledged to himself fully that he was not here out of idle scorn or curiosity but because of a determination to use Allie s death to his advantage He was stalking Bootmaker in some cunning obscure way He was here to learn what it was he had to do next

He found he was trembling and he peeked nervously at his neighbors—on his left an obese woman of indeterminate age wearing furs and a jeweled wrist watch and on his right a well tailored gentleman who eructated regularly and passionately and who stared eagerly at the stage with its long table water pitcher and glasses and podium

The lights blinked a warning and a moment later lowered Three people came out on the stage Momentarily the symposium turned into a football rally A robust fortyish man in the front row rose from his seat and swinging his arms cried Health! Health! Health! Alll—tooogether! Health! He subsided mopping his forehead and a piano off stage could be heard opening the Star Spangled Banner

Thank God Spartan thought reseating himself they didn t try to make a yell out of symposium But his amused detachment deserted him when the stage lights brightened and he saw Horace Bootmaker another man with a goatee and a handsome woman seated side by side The trio smiled graciously receiving applause and the woman bent her body forward in a graceful welcoming arc The set of her shoulders as they rose from her gray floor length gown was exemplary but it was her hair that arrested the eye It had a gun metal sheen like varnish laid on her skull with the track of a parting finger down the middle Because of this she had a hooded quality that dispelled any vapidity her classic features might otherwise have had Another time Spartan would have stared at her greedily now he only glanced at his program noting that her name was Professor Phoebe Kidd

and that her degrees were a jumble as meaningless as the array in a bowl of alphabet soup

It was Dr Bootmaker taking his place at the speakers stand who held Spartan s attention The abortionist was beaming jocular and assured There was only a physical resemblance to the man who two days before had methodically washed the blood from a corpse before arranging for the burial

He began with a bellow then modulated to a full-bodied boom Thank you thank you Before introducing my fellow speakers let me say that the fine attendance here is extremely gratifying. As you know this is the first of our symposia and from your response I can safely say it will not be the last Yes thank you the eyes of every health minded citizen in the nation are on us tonight We have declared that we intend to speak freely fearlessly and in defiance of the medical doctors and their powerful lobby in Washington Thank you now that we are engaged in a war to make the world politically free it is time that every citizen takes up arms against the medical lobby and engages in a war to make the world *hygienically free*! Free of *death-dealing needles* of murderous vaccination laws of medical-doctor inspired public health bureaus and their interference with nature s ways of healing Free of thank you thank you I know that each one of you here is going to become a soldier in this great battle And to you I say Welcome participants in the Los Angeles Health Symposium welcome! The fate of the entire world s strong young healthy men and women of tomorrow rests upon your shoulders!

" thank you And now I wish to introduce the charming and brilliant British nutritionist and nutritional therapist Professor Phoebe Kidd Yes uh

And Doctor Knox K Knox author of the book *How to Heed Nature s Call* and one of Los Angeles s most prominent healers

Dr Knox rose caressed his goatee thoughtfully and sat down

Myself continued the chairman growing ponderously waggish if you haven t heard of me—am Horace V Bootmaker D E M Thank you thank you Our first speaker will be Doctor Knox Doctor Knox!

The opening words of Dr Knox jarred his audience into a state of uncompromising self-search

Have you eliminated properly today?

Have you? Ask yourself that question and answer it truthfully Have I eliminated properly today? Have I?

We have all bathed the outsides of our bodies today but have we bathed the insides as well? Because to be really clean we must cleanse ourselves inside and out And inside cleansing can be accomplished only by proper elimination Of the poisons that our bodies need to rid themselves of

If you have answered my question in the positive you may think you have properly eliminated for today But have you?

If you have appendicitis you haven t If you have arthritis you haven t if you have heart trouble you haven t if you have female disorders you haven t if you have a Low Vital Force you haven t——

The man on Spartan s right eructated

a high enema Note that I did not say a low inefficient enema a half measure lick and a promise enema High enema! '

Dr Knox fondled his goatee and smiled Have you he inquired gently answered Nature s Call today?

The audience sighed bowed down by the putrifying guilt of its shameful state of constipation Dr Knox wagged his head sorrow fully Colon blockage he said seriously absorbs volts and volts of Vital Life Electricity And only when this blockage is sluiced over and over by Nature s warm healthful water is the electricity re leased again into the body and the waste products washed away

Dr Knox paused and mused Then gathering himself he launched upon a vivid oration concerning the delights and refreshing effects of colonics artificially induced diarrheas and high enemas He asserted blandly that the parents in the audience should administer the vaunted high enema to their children at the fi st symptom of appen dicitis He gave his office address several times mentioned the number of treatment tables therein and the size of his staff and then and there made a stupendous offer to all within sound of his voice to receive one introductory treatment for whatever they were suffering from for the nominal fee of five dollars Concluding his speech he went slightly afield and threw in the gratuitous information that dia betes could be cured by a series of colonics plus a healthful diet of vegetables fruits nuts dates figs papaya juice molasses and orange blossom honey

Listening to the pounding applause Spartan thought He ought to be jailed and then remembered that he could no longer afford righteous anger He sat impatiently unable to appreciate the words of a song bellowed to the tune of "I've Been Working on the Rail road

"I've been eating my papaya
All the live-long day
I ve been eating glutenburgers
To live the live-long way
Can t you feel those muscles growing?
Rise up so early in the morn
We ve been getting up at daybreak,
Ev ver since we were born!

The hymn concluded, Dr Bootmaker turned the rostrum over to Professor Phoebe Kidd Her talk should have been declared a crime, both in content and delivery Shrilling at her audience in the exasperating scream that women of spurious claims to breeding affect as a British accent, she lacerated the mind with her piercing voice Her subject dealt exclusively with kumiss which turned out to be fer mented mare s milk and which she avowed in a shriek cured tuberculosis colitis meningitis and hepatitis

I couldn t possibly carry it off Spartan thought, fidgeting and willing himself to rise and leave But his one chance to better himself to have a decent place to live decent clothes to wear decent women to sleep with his one chance to have a carpeted office and himself called Doctor again instead of "Hey you was approaching the podium in the person of Horace V Bootmaker

He stayed in his seat staring at Bootmaker wretched with self loathing and almost physically sick with his last-ditch determination. He tried to make himself see how hilariously funny the quacks on the platform were and could not advance beyond his personal conviction that they were dangerous and that he was here to learn how to become one of them

Then acid spewed into his mouth and he realized that he was almost thirty nine years old and an ex-convict with three bills and some change in his pocket, and no future and no place to go And yet he was sitting in the midst of people who had money wallets and purses and bank accounts full of it people who would be only too

willing to give him their money to press it on him if only he would condescend to take it from them dishonestly He was sitting among them, a competent physician and he was hungry

He discovered he was straining forward in his seat sweating He slumped back wiping the beads from his forehead Knowing now what quackery would be like, he had made his decision and his trembling was no longer that of incertitude but of relief He was here he told himself calmly neither to sneer nor be shocked, but merely to learn

He watched closely as Bootmaker finished off a glass of water before pouncing on the audience with a savage verbal lunge

By the year 1948 *almost every child born in America will be a mulatto cigarette dope fiend!*

Bootmaker waited for fifteen seconds before continuing I said mulatto! A half-caste race that is part white part red part what have-you And all cigarette fiend I tell you that plans so nefarious so evil that I myself could not believe them at first are being put into execution this minute to turn this nation into a garbage can of mixed blood cigarette-sucking idiots! And I must have looked just as you do now when I first heard of what is going on in the armed forces—the future parents—of this country

But think—is it not a fact that our soldiers and sailors our boys your sons and husbands are the fathers of tomorrow? Is it not a fact that what is done to them alone could change the future and complexion of the nation forevermore?

"Then let me ask you this—is it not a fact that the tobacco lobbyists are in Washington this minute prevailing upon the Army Navy and Marine brass to force coerce and inveigle each and every serviceman to smoke their filthy products? It is a fact Let us not fool ourselves at this peril fraught moment when our beloved nation stands on the brink of a terror even more appalling than a Japanese invasion of this sacred soil For we are already invaded! Our military forces are already decimated by the insidious poison—tobacco

"I tell you that if the truth were to be known this whole nation would be thrown into confusion horror and revolt For it is a fact that our fighting men are almost totally incapacitated—to a man—because their young bodies are riddled with nicotine One pack of cigarettes a day contains enough poison to kill one hundred mice

Even the paper itself is full of arsenic Arsenic' That s what the tobacco manufacturers used to purify their cigarette papers

'There you have it the unvarnished hideous truth All over this country the military camps are overflowing with arsenic poisoned weakened men waiting to be sent overseas to fight! That is the state of American youngmanhood this is the physical condition of the troops who are going to stumble—sick poisoned and dope addicted —against the enemy to defend us This is what the tobacco lobbyists have done to nine hundred out of every thousand fighting men and want—demand—that they be permitted to continue doing

"Are you going to do anything to stop them? Are you? Or are you going to say to yourselves My boy is all right My boy doesn t smoke he knows that tobacco will destroy him no matter how many cigarettes they pour into the camps no matter how many of his superior officers urge him to smoke My boy is steadfast he is a Nature-thinker! Is that what you re going to say to yourselves?

And what are you going to say when he lies helpless and wounded? When he is at the mercy of the Army and Navy *medical doctors* when to save his life they pump the blood of cigarette-smoking civilians into his veins? When they pollute his pure fine young body with the nicotine-clotted blood of those very people who every day you can see sucking on cigarettes as they drive themselves to the nearest blood center! Can he be steadfast when he is unconscious can he help himself?

Or is it up to us we pitifully few handful of Nature thinkers in this country today? It s up to us if we have to fight in hand to-hand combat every medical doctor and tobacco lobbyist and manufacturer alive!

In time Bootmaker worked his way around to the miscegenation of future generations Do you think they separate the blood at the centers into smokers and nonsmokers and white and black? Do you really think they do?

You know and I know that they pump the blood of Negro cigarette smokers into the veins of our white nurses and WAACS! Our white sisters and daughters!

What is that but spiritual moral physical hygienic ravishment of the future mothers of this nation'

He s good Spartan thought grudgingly He s got them convinced that he believes this crap that it s true

" or is each and every one of you going to wire his Congressman inform your neighbors and friends write to the papers and in general raise our voices acro.s the land in such indignant clamor that even the enemy across the sea will shiver and say There s a nation that s aroused there s a

" medical doctors are united in the biggest the most illegal trust of all time The butchers and poison injectors have their money bags to protect their idiot germ theories and their murderous drugs and vaccines

" and I challenge Morris Fishbein editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* to come up on this platform some night and refute me! If—he dares!

" had to study long arduous years in all of Nature s multiferous departments the way we Nature healers do there wouldn t be a handful of them in the country And their kindergarten medical schools where they teach them how to inject poisoned cow s blood into the veins of innocent babies would fall into ruin They d be lost without their cancer producing coal tar drugs and their shots and sulfadumfripperies that kill more human beings than all the world s illnesses put together!"

" five virgin girls all inoculated with syphilis when a criminally negligent medical doctor 'vaccinated them against smallpox I have the documentation in my possession sent to me by a Doctor of Empirical Medicine in Cleveland "

" germs are in your body for one purpose To eat the poisons and wastes and mucus that is in your body because you re eating dead animals and refined foods They eat only rot, and if you ve got rot in your bodies then it follows you ve got germs And when the medical doctors inject all their chemicals and sulfa whatevers there s just that much more rot for the happy little germs to eat on "

" it s a mystery to me in these days of enlightened Natural healing, of sane and sensible eating, and all the logical teachings that we Nature-doctors are devoting our lives to place in the hands of a

willing and eager intelligent and fearless group of people like those before me tonight—and despite all the medical doctors and legislative lobbies and the American Medical Association can do we're going to succeed!

"You can put your faith and pin your hopes on that, believe me! And I thank you one and all! You will each be notified through the mails as well as by your own Nature healing physician when our next symposium will take place next spring I can't say as yet, just who our eminent speakers will be——"

I can tell you one of them Spartan thought and he rose to push his way through the crowd almost jauntily

It had begun to rain again with a dreary insistence and he splashed his way back to the hotel In his room he took off his drenched suit and sat in his underwear On scraps of hotel stationery he began to write out strange words ending variously in *tics ology* and *pathy* Muttering to himself and frowning, he spelled words backwards mated phrases that were destined to wrangle throughout their conjugal life and even indulged in a game of anagrams

At last getting a fresh sheet of paper and chuckling to himself he wrote across it in his most flourishing hand

Spartan McClintock Doctor of Healthopathy

Then turning off the light, he fell into bed.

VII

He went out cheerfully into the sullen morning and had breakfast at a cafeteria Over his coffee he dallied with the notion of having his suit pressed and then dismissed it It appealed to him to appear before Bootmaker a rumpled oafish Nemesis He sensed that it would make him seem implacable

Leaving the cafeteria he walked the few blocks to the library—a building which had always confounded him for though it was supposed to be a fine example of Aztec or some esoteric school of architecture it managed to look more like a railroad station than any he had ever seen in his life Inside a librarian helped him to find what he wanted

On a piece of paper he copied the following statute verbatim

> *The drugless practitioner s certificate authorizes the holder to treat diseases injuries deformities or other physical or mental conditions without the use of drugs or what are known as medi cal preparations and without in any manner severing or pene trating any of the tissues of human beings except the severing of the umbilical cord*

Below that he copied the list of subjects covered on the exam for drugless practitioners

Anatomy (including histology)
Physiology
General Diagnosis
Elementary Pathology and Bacteriology
Obstetrics
Toxicology and Elementary Chemistry
Public Health and Preventive Medicine

He was now ready to blackmail Bootmaker

In Bootmaker s reception room were two well-dressed women not together one of whom was accompanied by a boy of five or six The insipid beauty seated at her desk looked sharply at Spartan as he came in and then spoke softly and urgently into the box on her left Her eyes swiveled back to him as she listened to her instructions

Am I really going to do this he asked himself and then Boot maker s nurse was standing there glaring at him She said icily Doctor Bootmaker will see you in his office

Enter he thought going into the paneled office Spartan McClin tock H D He said to his future partner behind the desk Don t tell me you didn t expect me back!

Bootmaker waited until the door closed behind the nurse He was neither jovial nor earnest as he had been last night he was deadly Under his *Universitatis Hawkinsiensis* diploma he measured Spartan balefully deliberately overlooking the courtesy of asking his visitor to be seated

Spartan chose a leather chair and plumped himself in it familiarly slumping slightly to show he was at ease

By the tightening of his mouth as he watched this performance Bootmaker revealed that he had granted Spartan a point Finally he

said "You re a bigger fool than I thought No I did not expect you back

You re assuming I m after money Spartan said pleasantly smiling

Instantly his opponent became equally pleasant. Suppose you assume a few things about me One that I do not tolerate black mail.

No one tolerates it. They endure it."

I won t."

"Look Bootmaker Spartan said in a courteously informative tone I have nothing to lose No family no future no money I don t know exactly what I would be charged with but you I imagine would be up for murder

Bootmaker continued to regard him blandly I don t bluff Now will you get out of here or must I call the police?

Dropping his pose of affability Spartan snapped Oh hell yes do that By all means call the police We d each be babbling so fast they wouldn t know which to listen to

Do you think Bootmaker asked curiously 'you re the first ever to come in here with an idea like this?

I do indeed So before we continue shooting off our mouths let me state my proposition "

Bootmaker regarded him thoughtfully saying nothing

"All right then Let s say my salary will be about four hundred to start Or until I ve got my practitioner s license we'll put it that way Until the exam comes up I ll just act as your assistant learn your gimmicks—for certain of your activities that is——

Seeing that he had taken Bootmaker by surprise at last he pushed his advantage continuing in a rush 'Then when I m licensed maybe we can open a branch office and I ll handle it. If that crowd *at the symposium last night is any indication of the number of po*tential dupes in this town you re overlooking a good bet, Bootmaker Two of us can triple what you re taking in now And do it legitimately at that

But——

Oh don t you worry about that Doctor I can do as snappy a colonic irrigation as the next quack. And as for my qualifications — Spartan grinned insultingly— I am the proud possessor of an H.D degree Oh I haven t got it with me I m sorry But it will be ready to

show you in a day or so *Universitatis Plotkinuensis* In German of course since the university is located in Heidelberg——" Momentarily there rose in his mind the face of Gus Meunch, and he subsided Oh migawd if any of them could see me now Gus Milt, even Warden Weems I guess that about covers——" But he had lost the thread of his thought.

Bootmaker worried his mustache You realize " he evaded "you'll have to present transcripts of two years training in some state-accredited school or college? For your certificate you understand "

You mean, like Hawkins University?

Mr Mackintosh I m a busy man, and have no time to quibble——

Sorry Why argue the point? But I can present a transcript from the University of Tenneville as far as that goes The H.D degree is just icing He waited patiently while Bootmaker rose to the bait.

Just what is this H D ?

Spartan grinned Doctor of Healthopathy He pronounced it Hell thop-pathy On the order of Naturopathy so to speak Except that Naturopathy loosely means diseased nature and I have a degree in diseased health "

Disregarding Spartan s spontaneous laughter Bootmaker stared ceilingward mouth pursed under his precise mustache He mused at length, and finally turning his entire body in the swivel chair to face Spartan he asked bluntly What state did you get kicked out of Doctor?

I guess you could find out anyway Kennassee "

You were an M.D ?

Not quite

Illegal operations?

"No Spartan added pointedly "I have never performed an abor tion and I never intend to

'Then Bootmaker said with a note of finality, I fail to see what it is you re offering me

That s because you re stuck in a rut. You re still mucking around in the old chiropractor naturopath high-enema routine with abor tions on the side But that bunch of crackpots you lectured to last night are ripe for something novel something expensive They're asking to be exploited in a new and fanciful way

And you think Healthopathy is the way?

"I do indeed think Healthopathy—oh, the hell with that—I m damn sure *I ve* got a few ideas that will have those poor fools pound ing at the door to get in In the first place I know more about medi cine than you and all your pals put together In the second place I will have the novelty value on my side And in the third, no mat ter how fantastic a gimmick or gadget I think up to use on the pa tients I can guarantee it won t do a smitch of harm There won t be any of my patients dying of coronary occlusion in hotel rooms or of cancer on my treatment table for that matter I won t have to worry about being hounded by the D.A s office because of deaths arising from malpractice Do you know why? Because I intend to have the healthiest most robust bunch of hypochondriacs extant today as my patients We'll send the sick ones to our competitors—let them run the risks——" No I won t do that, he promised himself silently but I'll say so for now

Bootmaker stirred 'Sounds ideal How are you going to do it?"

"Easy Doctor, easy I ll simply weed them out."

"Oh "

"Yes oh! Face up to yourself how good a diagnostician are you? You re lousy and you know it. You don t know as much as a good R.N., not one-third——"

"You I take it, do?"

"Damn right I m a crackerjack diagnostician And that s where we'll have the draw on the rest of the boys Half the time they don t know trouble when they see it. So we ll just use them as a repository for our cast-offs and gain their undying gratitude to boot. We don t want the ill—they re in the minority anyway—we want all the healthy ones running around looking for the new Messiah And Bootmaker *I think I m it!* Spartan discovered he was on his feet and sat down hastily He leaned forward and said ingenuously "You re going to stake me I m broke"

"I intend to Oh " Bootmaker lit a cigarette and blew a stream of smoke ceilingward " one thing Doctor Mac——

McClintock What is it?

I intend to invest in you on a purely business basis only I would like you to know that personally I consider you a boor and a rascal"

Sweating after his frenzied oratory Spartan wiped his forehead and made a slight bow "Doctor Bootmaker we are well met" Look ing at his new partner he said directly "And now I'll need money

I m shabby and I m staying in a dumpy hotel. I ll want my whites tailored of course but in the meantime " He gauged the width of Bootmaker s magnificent white-coated shoulders and mentally compared them to his own gauntness " in the meantime I can t wear yours

Bootmaker smiled contemptuously Naturally I expected to make you an advance But before you speak of tailors I suggest you visit a barber Your shabby clothing is not half as objectionable as the fact that you are unkempt He appraised Spartan leisurely "I doubt if your shoes can be repaired—buy new ones And while you re at the barber s you might have a manicure too Your nails are disgusting My patients are of the class which attaches much importance to personal cleanliness And incidentally you needn t bother about the whites I ll have my supply service send over some this afternoon

Feeling angry and gauche Spartan could only nod

I imagine that about —Bootmaker was opening his desk drawer with a key— three hundred ought to take care of everything for now I want you to get yourself personally acceptable by tomorrow morning The office opens at nine you be here no later than eight thirty If you are not, I shall assume you re looking for trouble and have you found

Endeavoring to appear bored Spartan murmured "Oh balls in reply to Bootmaker s threat

I suppose Bootmaker was saying to himself I would have given you this much anyway because of your nuisance value But I don t like to be made a fool of Since we have entered into a business agreement I expect you to keep your part of the bargain Assuming of course that you are as capable as you say

I am! Spartan said angrily Look here Bootmaker you yourself called this a business agreement so don t——

Do not address me by my last name alone! I am Doctor Bootmaker to you and you will be Doctör McIntyre to me

McClintock!

Very well"

And as I was saying *Doctor* Bootmaker an advance on my salary is not charity——"

"It s blackmail, Bootmaker interrupted smoothly Until you

have proved yourself And I warn you if you re a fraud you ll re gret it

Oh balls Spartan said with more spirit this time

One other thing I will not tolerate vulgarity in my office Even if you aren t a gentleman assume the façade of one at least during office hours Now that s all Miss Gaily will show you out the back way I don t want any more of my patients to see you like this Turning away Bootmaker pushed a button and then busied himself with some papers on his desk leaving Spartan to sit in a silent and outraged funk.

When Miss Gaily made her belligerent entrance Bootmaker said in an off handed manner Oh Miss Gaily this is my new assist ant Doctor McClintock He ll be needing some white coats and so forth until his own arrive from New York Will you take care of it?

Miss Gaily s face arranged itself rapidly into a series of exag gerated expressions animosity sag mouthed amazement sullen re jection reluctant acceptance proper respect and finally bright efficiency Why certainly Doctor she managed breathily "How do you do Doctor McClintock? You re from New York Doctor?

Most recently Spartan said uneasily Have you been there?

Oh no you ll pardon me Doctor but you talk just like a——

Miss Gaily " Bootmaker said testily will you show the doctor to the rear exit after you have taken care of his needs And then have the next patient put into Three

talk like a Southerner Doctor Miss Gaily resumed when she and Spartan were in the hall Like Bootmaker Miss Gaily was forgetful That three days ago Spartan had removed a dying woman from the treatment room they were now passing seemed completely to have slipped her mind

Healthopathy Spartan thought going down on the elevator But my God what is it?

viii

He spent almost every cent Bootmaker had given him immediately In new shoes and a new suit that made his feet look awkward emerg

ing from his cuffless pants he went apartment hunting Contrary to all the dark mutterings he had heard about the housing shortage he found a bachelor within a short bus ride of the office By the simple expedient of accepting without cavil a rental charge of three and a half times what the small apartment should have commanded he was graciously given the key and told to make himself at home

Moving in he looked about him contemptuously, at the closet kitchen the damp shower the pull-down bed In his mind he had already left this place behind him for better surroundings although it was comparatively more luxurious than any home he had ever had in his life

That night he filled his tiny built in refrigerator with beer and thus fortified lay down on the bed to muse on the precepts and teachings of healthopathy Inspiration came slowly he acknowledged that he needed a gimmick or what the detective stories he had read so omnivorously last spring called a caper" Drugs and surgery of course were out of the question By law he would not be able to use even local anesthetics and thus hampered he came again to his original premise the only part of his training he could apply was diagnosis And that had mainly a negative value Having weeded out the genuinely ill he still needed something positive to offer to those patients he retained

Uncapping his second quart of beer he mulled the matter I need a machine—and not just one of those stupid pieces of apparatus that consist of two electrodes and a fluctuating needle I need

Vaguely he realized that he was becoming rather tight for abruptly he had drifted back to his freshman days in med school He knocked his glass over reaching for it discovered that it was empty anyway and proceeded to drink from the bottle Inexorably he found himself reliving his friendship with Buddy Boswell The dissecting room with Buddy paling squeamishly the physiology lab with Buddy racing ludicrously about the room after the experimental rabbit he had permitted to get away from them and himself placing a tambour on Buddy s fat breasty chest so they could make a cardiograph of Buddy s heart while Buddy wriggled and protested 'God damn thing tickles' Marey s cardiograph Spartan thought I can remember drawing the apparatus in my lab notebook and then telling Buddy to remove the smoked paper from the drum and the ass brushed his sleeve across it and smeared the graph all to hell We

shellacked it anyway because the second one we did of me was perfect By the time we d used a sphygmomanometer and the plethysmograph at least that half wit would be trusted to smoke the paper put it on take it off shellac it, and hang it to dry with only the normal accidents that could be expected of a child in kindergarten.

He sighed and dropped off to sleep Later he awoke and swayed to the bathroom to brush his teeth Frowning at himself in the mirror a thought caused him to remain motionless his mouth full of foam. The plethysmograph he thought, the sphygmomanometer—either one of them would impress the hell out of a layman He spat drank from the faucet and spat again While undressing and later while lying nude under a light blanket he was thoughtful He had the germ of a gimmick there even if he didn t believe in germs any more At least, not in public, he didn t

However before Horace Bootmaker in the morning he reverted again to his heretical beliefs in the germ theory and Bootmaker did not disapprove

Dressed in whites that fit him well enough, Spartan attended and abetted Bootmaker as he tortured a ten year-old boy Spartan held the boy s hands while Bootmaker grasped the child s head roughly The mother a wealthy wild-eyed neurotic watched trustingly

The boy had otitis media and both ears were affected. He was in pain In his examination that had followed Bootmaker s Spartan had found an injection of the tympanic membrane partial obliteration of landmarks and retraction of Shrapnell s membrane He had waited curiously and with some apprehension to see what Bootmaker intended to do with the boy on this his second visit

Bootmaker sat the boy on a stool nodded at Spartan to restrain his hands and set to work announcing heartily to the struggling child Now you just relax young man you re not going to be hurt, you know I m not going to stick needles in you or anything like that." Grabbing the boy s head he held it tightly in the curve of his arm Miss Gaily came forward with a tongue depressor on which there was a blob of lubricant. Bootmaker applied himself without delay taking up the lubricant on his right index finger he forced the boy s mouth open with his left hand the left index pressing severely on the cheek to prevent biting and thrust his finger in the mouth. Rubbing along the internal surface of the cheek with his finger Boot

maker explained over the patient s gagging Now if Robert would practice his breathing exercises more Mrs Powell he wouldn t have these earaches But he s let his Eustachian tubes get occluded again from mouth breathing

The mother nodded penitently The boy struggled and gagged. Bootmaker rubbed mercilessly shifting to the opposite cheek after a while Spartan felt himself growing angry—earaches were painful enough without subjecting the kid to a mauling like this

Abruptly Bootmaker released his victim and the boy commenced a low despairing howling

It s your own fault Robert" Bootmaker repeated in a scolding tone as he washed the spittle from his hands at the bowl "I believe I ve explained to you before Mrs Powell that we must must breathe through the nostrils The right nostril takes in the positive elements of oxygen and the left the negative Unless alternatively, the lungs receive both necessary elements of life giving oxygen ill ness ensues He cocked a brow at Spartan

Quite Doctor Spartan said crisply longing to kick Bootmaker s white-covered buttocks

I was wondering Mrs Powell said tentatively if maybe he *shouldn t have his tonsils out?*

Bootmaker whirled on her in injured surprise 'Why Mrs Powell! You don t mean to tell me that you think *mutilation* is natural healing!

Mrs Powell hung her head

You ll have to bring Robert back in again tomorrow Boot maker said severely and nodded to Miss Gaily to make the appoint ment

Back in his office Bootmaker lit a cigarette offering one to Spartan Well Doctor McClintock what do you think?

Refusing the cigarette Spartan took the leather chair I don t suck cigarettes thank you Doctor Restraining a grin he continued seriously What do I think? The boy s got catarrhal otitis media You know that

"What do you suggest I do with him?

"Sulfa Spartan said And at the very least quit tormenting him

Rubbish doesn t harm him Sulfa eh? Very brilliant Doctor And where do I get it? Is this what your Healthopathy is a

warmed-over rehash of the drug ads? Look, McClintock—Doctor McClintock—I expect some——

'That s better *Doctor* Bootmaker Spartan interposed with dignity

" expect something concrete out of you What do you propose I do with the boy? His parents are quite wealthy and I want to get some results on the kid

I told you—sulfa Either that or get rid of him

McClintock, aren t you even aware that his condition will subside on its own in time?

Or Doctor Bootmaker his acute congestive otitis media could become purulent. Then what are you going to do—rub his cheeks until the pus rolls out of his ears and down his neck? Suppose in a couple of weeks you ve got a case of mastoiditis on your hands It would be a happy new year for your practice if the kid got inter cranial complications! The enormity of the risks quacks ran constantly struck Spartan anew How the devil do you stay in business anyway? I should think you d have a graveyard all to your—— He broke off remembering Allie

Bootmaker observed the smoke from his cigarette leisurely "Many cases clear up or simply become chronic At any rate the patient learns to live with them What I want you to do is handle the dangerous ones for me And because this boy is a new patient and his parents are very influential I feel that he is dangerous

Just how much medicine do you know Doctor?" Spartan said tangentially

Oh—a smattering Now—how about the Powell boy? And incidentally sulfa is out I can t seem to get it

Suddenly Spartan thought of Charlie the versatile pharmacist. Maybe I can get my hands on some

"Well if you can—do it!

That afternoon Spartan dropped over to the Vermont Street store to see Charlie The place was full of the Christmas spirit, with the douche bags pushed aside for the nonce to make way for gift boxes of men s shaving kits that men never used and women always bought for them candies and cosmetics and large woolly animals that looked as though they had been fallen upon by thugs but were actually supposed to represent giant pandas Charlie limping back and forth in

his cage was bored for Spartan saw that his outpatient clinic had come upon the season s doldrums

He approached the dapper pharmacist in a manner that was wily and found that his caution was unnecessary Charlie was going to get married it appeared Charlie was therefore rather interested in the subject of money Nor did he miss Spartan s new suit and his air of having come upon a windfall

When it came to minor black market activities along the lines of sulfas a few local anesthetics and a barbiturate or two (well, quite a number of bottles of them in fact) Charlie was in

Keep me in mind Mac" was Charlie s farewell plea.

And Spartan said breezily "I'll do that little thing!"

Bootmaker was pleased with Spartan s conquest of Charlie for the Powell boy s left ear was suppurative by Thursday although the right was clearing up nicely The sulfa Spartan administered was declared to be tablets of Nature s pure oxygen" and Mrs Powell breathed dutifully through both nostrils and looked pleased.

After treating the boy Spartan looked ahead to a day of colonics diathermy treatments and one further patient an agreeable nymphomaniac of fifty-odd who loved having her back rubbed and would adore Bootmaker surmised shrewdly having the handsome Spartan take over the task At four fifteen Bootmaker and Miss Gaily would be closeted with a pregnant girl and after that, the day would be over

He sighed and admonished Robert sympathetically "Don t jerk away from me you make it hurt worse that way" He had ready an unlabeled bottle of analgesic drops for Mrs Powell to put in the boy s ears at home Just pure olive oil The olives specially grown for Natural healing purposes

Glumly he realized he would have to rein himself up short, for with the Powell boy and several others like him he was actually practicing medicine And that had not been his bargain with Bootmaker or even with himself Instead of exploiting the forest, he had succumbed to the temptation of nurturing one or two tiny trees

He knew that Bootmaker was giving him only enough time to become oriented before he needs must come out with something spectacular Having assured Bootmaker that he was a wonder boy it now behooved Spartan to prove it

Healthopathy he reminded himself grimly has got to spring into existence mighty damn shortly

And just before the office was closed for the day Bootmaker him self brought the matter up Under his *Universitatis Hawkinsiensis* diploma he prodded Spartan forcefully Well Doctor when do the fireworks start?

Oh I——" Spartan mumbled inadequately He took up a bottle of kelp tablets from the desk and read the label absent mindedly "My ideas haven t quite jelled yet to be perfectly frank

I see " Bootmaker smoked silently for a moment or two to show his displeasure

*The silence worried Spartan and he filled it with a bright ques*tion "How much do you charge for a bottle of these tablets?

"Dollar and a half Now you look here when you came in Mon day——"

"And how much do you buy them for?"

"Fifty cents Listen here when I hired you you promised——"

"The least you could do is sell vitamins—they might jazz up the patients a little But this crap isn t worth throwing back into the sea where it came from Do many of them buy it?

A few I don t bother to push it

Spartan slammed the bottle down on the desk. "Hey wait a min ute! I hit on something there I think haven t you noticed how vitamins are getting to be a national fad? Why millions a year are being spent to advertise them and we can cash in on that for free These Natural-cure cranks would fall for the right approach like a row of tenpins "

Bootmaker brightened but forced himself to look skeptical "I m afraid I don t understand I'm not a manufacturer I m a——"

'You re a jerk Spartan interrupted blithely "and so was I not to think of it I know what Healthopathy is now Hoary and I think I know what to do with it. Now tomorrow—oh God I forgot it s so near Christmas—that ll screw things up until after the first of the year——"

And Bootmaker was crying savagely *What did you call me?*

"Huh? Oh sorry I guess everyone naturally thinks of doing that to your name Spartan apologized lamely

"Don t ever Bootmaker said spacing each word for emphasis "call me that again. H

Sorry" Spartan repeated, knowing that having once made the slip he would be calling Bootmaker that in his mind and probably half the time to his face from there on Anyway I think we can set this up in January and have it rolling for the spring symposium I ll have my certificate by then and I can——

I don t know what you re talking about and I doubt if you do When you came in here Monday you talked like a pitch man but I felt you had something genuinely good that needed only a little working out I liked the sound of Healthopathy—it showed inventiveness—and I was anxious to give you a chance But now four days later you re in here giving me another pitch and you haven t done a thing all week but——

But get you out of a jam with the Powell kid and tell you to get rid of that poor woman with coccidioidomycosis before she died in the reception room some bright morning"

Oh I don t think she would have I'll admit I would never had guessed she had San Joaquin Valley fever——"

Well then Spartan interposed righteously And she is going to die with the stuff She s got the progressive form and I don t think she has the constitution to ride it out.

'That is still neither here nor there though The M D s lose pa tients constantly and there s no to-do about it

"M D s don t have to bother with cranks either We do And every time one of them dies under the age of eighty I'll bet a squawk goes up among the Faithful that you can hear clear out to Grand Street From what I ve seen of the coterie they seem to circulate among themselves a lot more than the patients an M D has And that means that a lot of gossip and comparing of notes must go on

Well of course Bootmaker said reasonably And that s one reason why I took you in You had me convinced you d stir up a little excitement, get the word going around that there s something new and titillating going on in the Bootmaker office Instead of that you ve curbed one patient s earache and advised me to send one of my most remunerative patients away As for the rest—any green kid out of chiropractic school could have done as efficiently and I d have paid him two hundred a month If I hired him at all that is

"Oh stop carping Spartan said unwisely

"Certainly And I think we should stop the nonsense too Mc

Clintock I'm dissatisfied Suppose you go somehwere else with your ideas

That s what I deserve for trying to deal with an ass Spartan thought He began heatedly What did you expect in three days? A horde of maniacs hiccuping with delight and pounding at the door because we re handing out pills to make them all eighteen again? I told you I would have to keep in the background until I got my certificate and you seemed to agree I was to help out with the routine stuff do a bit of diagnosis and damn little else until I could take the exam That was the agreement and here you are yapping——

I m doing more than yapping I m demanding Have you or haven t you something new to offer? Is Healthopathy a well worked out plan of attracting new patients and keeping them? Or is it just a name you stumbled across?

Taking the gamble Spartan decided to be honest Oh hell it was just a name A name plus the conviction that with my background I could probably think up a better line of junk than you and Knox K Knox put out at the symposium I had only this much to go on that you and all the rest were taking the negative approach You were panning the M D s and doing a bit of spinal adjustment and colonics and not much else And worst of all you were fooling around with a group of sick people who needed serious medical attention And that s as far as I had——

I might as well set you straight on one thing right now" Bootmaker interrupted but not rudely "You re right in that ostensibly we re out to cure illnesses But what you don t know is how this crew acts They listen to us pan the M D s and they seem to gobble it up But whenever they become desperately ill they cross the last ditch and run to an M D Of course as soon as they re cured they come right back to us again I can t explain the psychology behind it but it is a fact However we re getting away from the point McClintock

No we re not Spartan said thinking rapidly we re right on it As I say you take the negative approach The sick ones leave you anyway and the healthy ones stay in the same condition And by that I mean you don t jazz them up you don t—— Look let me put it this way A hypochondriac walks in here You pummel her around a bit and tell her to breathe through her nostrils Momentarily you ve distracted her but when she goes home her imagination starts up

again The next day she s over at Knox s and the next, she s listening to Phoebe Kidd tell her about the delights of kumiss And that s my——"

Like a game of musical quacks " Bootmaker said smiling.

A—I guess I didn t hear you "

"I said that they make the rounds like a game of musical quacks, so to speak "

"Oh And that, Spartan told himself will teach you to misjudge your man Pulling himself together he went on "Your point is my point So anyone who comes up with a system that will actually perk up the hypochondriacs physically has a drop on the rest of the boys "

"He most certainly would have Have you got such a system?"

"I think so It was the bottle of kelp tablets that gave me the idea. But we ll have to work quietly on this because if the rest catch on they ll be doing it, too and the music will start all over again "

"And what is your idea?"

"Vitamins "

"Just vitamins?"

"Empirically yes " Spartan said slyly pronouncing the word. "The rest is predicated on garnering all the cranks away from The Boys and handing them the dangerous cases in turn Of course I ll have to think up a line of patter about kinetic forces or something like that And the vitamins won t be called vitamins we'll call them Dynamics or something like that and——

I don t think——

no we won t! We'll call them Kinetabs! Just that nothing more We can go through a lot of hocus pocus diagnosing them—I have an idea or two for that—and then prescribe Kinetabs to jazz them up " Spartan saw Bootmaker was wincing "What s the matter?

"Your expression jazz them up It irritates me

"Oh? Well anyway the tablets will have to contain a lot of B_1 to—umm—promote a feeling of energetic well being But the point is this Since they will not know what they re getting and it s a fact that vitamins can and do——"

I am aware of that, McClintock But as I say I m not a manufacturer——

No but you re happy to sell kelp tablets to anyone who'll take them Why not have our own brand of vitamins packaged and

labeled for us alone Nothing on the label to indicate what it is And with the rigmarole about kinetics to go with it. Well, can't you see what I m driving at?"

"Yes and it won t work In the first place there are legal angles——"

"There are lawyers for hire also"

"In the second your idea isn t new enough. Kidd is always screaming her head off about vitamins"

Spartan leaned forward and said in all sincerity "What makes you think it won t succeed? It s mediocre enough isn t it?

Bootmaker turned in his chair and appraised Spartan at length "I'm afraid I've underestimated you McClintock But that s the first intelligent thing you ve said this afternoon If you hold your course to that line of thinking, you can make a success of anything I know"

"Damn right"

"Since we agree on that, let s get down to the details You must have something in mind

BOOK IV

Relapse and Further Medication

1

THE NIGHT before the spring symposium Dr Spartan McClintock looking very debonair in dark blue gabardine emerged from a taxi in Beverly Hills and stood staring up at the Georgian house before which he had been deposited. It was exactly eight o clock and Dr McClintock had made it a point to be prompt. Although only newly certified as a drugless practitioner in the state of California Dr Mc Clintock had about him an air of long and well-deserved success in the field of medicine But despite his air of affluence he was not above envying the home of his associate Dr Horace V Bootmaker an envy which was slightly tinged with insult for this was his first visit here

Fully expecting to be greeted by a supercilious butler Spartan was a bit disappointed when Bootmaker himself opened the door Looking about the hall curiously he followed his host to the library He knew already that Professor Phoebe Kidd was there for her shrilling could be heard even in the front of the house and his step quickened as it occurred to him that the presence of one woman could presuppose another—the mysterious daughter of Bootmaker s about whom Miss Gaily had hinted Bootmaker himself never mentioned his personal life at all except once to say casually My ex wife used to live in Philadelphia "

In four months that was all Spartan had learned about his associate His ex wife lived in Philadelphia But of Bootmaker's origin his background and education with the exception of the illustrious mail-order degree from Hawkins University Spartan knew nothing

He entertained the brief recollection that he too had been equally reticent about his own past And then as they approached the library he asked above Phoebe Kidd s racket, Who s here tonight?

"Oh, Quent Quarles may drop in later But I asked only Knox,

Preebles and Kidd She brought some fairy along with her a new patient and a movie writer I believe

My God Spartan said unhappily I don t know why we let Kidd stick her nose in this time anyway She s not going to talk

At least not from the rostrum Bootmaker said skeptically

I was wondering if any of your family Spartan ventured

No

This was Saturday and they had not seen each other since five o clock the day before

Of recent weeks Spartan had been busy and much of his time was spent away from the office There was the printer to see about the throwaways Quent Quarles their lawyer to consult about the legality and pitfalls of their scheme the haggling to be done with the vitamin manufacturing company over the price of Kinetabs and long arduous sessions with an earnest Ph D in chemistry Dr Stanley the research chemist of the vitamin company Out of his labors Spartan had garnered a headful of annoyances along with a spruce new ed ucation in the chemistry of vitamins His biochemistry had been rustier than he had imagined and in the field of vitamins more than antiquated

meny meny famous people—— Phoebe was shrieking when she caught sight of Spartan in the doorway Her gun metal sprayed skull swung around and up Why it s Doctor McClintock! My dear doctor how have you bean?

Very well thank you Spartan said looking about to see if drinks were being served There were none in evidence and he re turned his attention disappointedly to the professor Each time he renewed his flimsy acquaintance with Phoebe it came to him what a pity it was that behind her attractive face there was mush instead of a mind He always imagined to himself that her brain resembled a bowl of some particularly unappetizing cooked breakfast cereal with thin blue milk running in a pattern over it for the convolutions

I want you to meet a truly dear friend of mine Doctor Ives Stanhope the writer

A reedy creature rose from Phoebe s side and laid his hand trust ingly in Spartan s How d you do?

Murmuring that he was indeed in the best of health Spartan won dered with a grisly humor what would happen to a creature like this were he to be locked in among the burly lovers of the Gap Long

eyelashes guarded Stanhope s gelatinous eyes and when he looked away from Spartan they rested fragile as a butterfly s wing within the blue hollows above the cheeks

Ives wrote that wonderful wonderful book Remembered Miracle Phoebe said About his recovery from tuberculosis through intelligent diet

Kumiss? Spartan asked

I preferred to make it into sort of a yogurt though The entire story of my recovery is in the book I m thinking of having it privately printed Naturally I shall be happy to present you with your copy Doctor

Delighted Spartan said inanely while within him he groaned loudly and at length

Doctor Bootmaker tells me Doctor McClintock is the foremost exponent of Healthopathy in the country! Phoebe sreamed cordially

I am the only practitioner in this country Spartan interposed

But that s fabulous! Stanhope said Do tell me about Healthopathy Doctor Tuberculous and overfatigued though he might be he was wearing an expression of ardent devotion to the rigorous game of musical quacks

I wonder Spartan mused if Phoebe puts him to bed or if she just lets him run around between hemorrhages?

Why Healthopathy is—— Phoebe commenced

In my lecture tomorrow night Spartan cut in with determination I will introduce Healthopathy to this country You see it was developed in Heidelberg by myself and my dear friend and teacher Doctor Plotkin But you ll be at the symposium won t you?

Oh I wouldn t miss it for the world Stanhope assured him

Yes Phoebe again began and after Doctor McClintock s speech we re going to have a wonderful speech from Doctor——

I m speaking last on the program dear Professor

Last! Surely the senior members should have the position of——"

Last Spartan repeated and then cried loudly Ah! Here come Doctor Knox and Doctor Preebles Glad to see you gentlemen!

Thus greeted so enthusiastically the newcomers stood blinking happily in the doorway

Now we can get started Spartan went on heartily rising from the couch Out of the corner of his eye he saw Bootmaker chuckling quietly to himself

There ensued because of Stanhope s fluttering presence a kind of gentle if total warfare The Doctors Bootmaker and McClintock fought bitterly, for they were on the defensive and they hurled at the advancing enemy everything they had in the way of smiles, waggish rejoinders and spurious humility But they held fast to their positions Bootmaker clinging to third place on the speakers list, and McClintock fourth At last, surrounded in their redoubts Dr McClintock grew icily polite like a Southerner unexpectedly finding himself at table with a notable Negro scholar and Dr Bootmaker waxed jolly and bland no dent could be made on either surface for the one was invulnerable and the other self sealing

Dr Preebles was the first to capitulate saying childishly "Oh all right! It s really quite immaterial to me Only I *was* one of the founders of the symposium and gave up my place entirely last time so that Doctor Knox here could bring his message So I feel that under the circumstances I should rightfully close the program But if we re going to make an issue of it—well He cast a melancholy glance at his spiritual twin Dr Knox and grew silent. Alike in appearance, age stupidity and penicillate chins the two gentlemen sympathized with each other mutely

"Oh come now Doctor Bootmaker was saying breezily, while Spartan announced at the same time Most rational placement of the speakers Doctor your fine message first "

have the boy bring in a little snack now that everything's settled to the satisfaction of all concerned Bootmaker was concluding suavely

Only Phoebe had been extraordinarily silent obviously warring within herself from the moment the battle was joined. Her entire contribution had been a series of squeaks and gasps as she scuttled from one opponent to the other She was still undecided when the dust had settled and the Filipino boy was serving a hot drink made of figs and lettuce sandwiches of rich nut bread Looking both ornamental and beddable in the glow from the fire she gazed at Spartan with the same tremulous speculation which her patient, Stanhope, was according him

Almost gagging on his fig coffee Spartan thought My God they both want me to go home with them! He started when Phoebe shrieked at him unexpectedly and realized with a wary acceptance that she had finally made up her mind. For better or worse, she was

wedded to the McClintock Bootmaker forces and had decided to consummate the marriage in public

I want a drink, Spartan thought, and I want it desperately He endured them all for another hour or so and then miraculously Preebles and Knox were stirring from their chairs like gophers emerging from their holes and Phoebe was bending inviting glances on Spartan as she rose sinuously from the couch Standing almost at attention as he shook hands with Stanhope he tabled Phoebe s motion with as regretful a smile as possible And when Spartan found himself alone he sprawled on the couch toasting his feet at the fire and laughing He continued to laugh even after Bootmaker returned from seeing *his guests to the door*

"Laugh if you like Bootmaker said "but don t underestimate them. And try to keep that sneering note out of your voice when you talk to Preebles and Knox. It became rather obvious for a while there "

"Oh, come off it, Hoary Spartan said carelessly

Suppose you get this through your head When you received your certificate last week you became one of us! I know you consider the M D s as demigods and from the way you act you seem to think of yourself as one But you happened to have conferred on yourself the degree of H D and you re stuck with it Furthermore those poor saps happen to believe in themselves——

'They couldn t Spartan stated flatly

Bootmaker smiled letting it pass How do you take your Scotch?

On the rocks Spartan said as Bootmaker rang for the boy "When s Quent making his appearance?

Oh he ll be along Bootmaker said and went to a large mahogany cabinet in the corner of the room Next, squatting he ran his hands along what Spartan discovered was an enormous collection of record albums Like opera? Bootmaker was asking

For a time thereafter Spartan was most grateful for the Scotch after a storm of sound had broken over his head The music was a garble of male and female voices all bawling loudly and with great abandon either at each other or at the orchestra which seemed to be conducting its own private dog fight

At the end of the record Bootmaker said triumphantly 'There! Verdi was eighty years old when he composed that!

Sounded it Spartan muttered Got anything a little quieter?

When Bootmaker complied playing a single female voice climbing the precipice of an aria clutching each jutting note for purchase slipping back and then with a shriek starting up again Spartan poured himself another stiffer drink

He leaned back closed his eyes and made a determined effort to shut out the sound

He knew he had dozed off when he heard Quent Quarles s booming from the hallway and saw Bootmaker rising from his deep chair by the phonograph Quarles was a great toadlike man who gave the impression he might also have a warty mind but did not To himself Spartan had said admiringly that Quent was slick a quarter-century term which he had not yet come to exchange for the word sharp " Tonight as though piqued by his own ugliness Quent had dressed himself in a suit of coarse orange brown tweed that almost exactly matched the clumps of hair scattered at random about his head Before he said anything Spartan knew that Quent like himself had a mild bun on

Hey am I late for the music lesson? Quarles roared Ah Scotch! Let me at that fire Spart it s nippy outside He filled a glass with ice poured a drink over it and stomped to the fire What s with you Hoary aren t you drinking with us tonight?

Bootmaker sighed I don t know whether you picked that up from McClintock or have been saving it for years—but don t call me Hoary And I ve had a drink thanks

A drink *A* drink! Quent said to Spartan Has he signed the pledge or something? He turned again to Bootmaker who was inspecting the remaining supply in the ice bucket And where s the glorious Iseult tonight? Ah ha I get it! You ve got her locked away in the cellar hiding her from our handsome Spart I suppose you feel it s safe to parade her in front of a harmless lech like me but when it comes to the dapper Doctor McClintock that s another aria out of a different opera huh Hoary? Hey did you note all those literary adjectives? he finished in a burst of self admiration

Isolde s out Bootmaker said snappishly McClintock and I have just been listening to a bit of *Lohengrin*

Quarles suspended his backside over the couch and then let his body drop with a thud—his habitual way of seating himself Some of his drink sloshed on his tie and he rubbed at it vigorously Now goddamn look at that! Here I come over all dressed up to court little

Isolde and she s out with some fraternity fruit and I have to slop all over my new tie Ah well *c'est la vie* And quit smirking McClintock I can outsit you any day when it comes to the lovely Isolde

I haven t met her Spartan said Who is she?

My daughter" Bootmaker said briefly

Spartan inserted slyly I thought she was in Philadelphia

That s my ex wife and she isn t any more

Done away with her huh? Quarles said Just like that—my ex wife isn t any——

Over Quarles s nonsense Spartan was saying I thought Miss Gaily said something about your having a daughter But I more or less assumed that she was away at school somewhere since she never came to the office

No reason for her to Bootmaker said shortly "Besides I don t want her to have anything to do with the kind of riffraff I have to associate with in my business

You overbearing snob Spartan thought angrily you abortionist with cultural pretensions' He arose saying icily I believe I ll be running along Thanks for your kind hospitality Bootmaker I ll see you tomorrow evening Quent won t I?

Oh siddown Quarles said Just because Hoary calls you riff raff you have to go and get insulted Wait a minute before you sit down hand me that lighter over there will you?

I ve called you worse than that Bootmaker said but this time I didn t happen to be referring to you So will you climb down from your horse or go home or do whatever you like but don t let it be said that I ever insulted anyone inadvertently I like to make a point of it or it s no fun at all

Spartan s pride gave way to his curiosity and he took his place on the couch again feeling the fool

"I now pronounce you man and wife Quarles said hoisting his glass at them Got anything to eat in this house besides glutenburgers Hoary?

Certainly Spartan said not able to resist a tilt at Bootmaker in return Hoary s got the house plumb full of Nature s own pure crap

Quarles who had just taken a drink from his glass swung his or ange head about in a desperate search for a receptacle in which to deposit the mouthful that was threatening to choke him With a gasp

he managed to reroute the liquor from his lungs to his stomach 'God! Don t do that to me again' He wiped his eyes and returned to Bootmaker How about some Mozart old boy? And lowering one warty lid at Spartan I m already in advanced music appreciation you see Wagner s too too plebeian for the likes of me

Pleased Bootmaker was already returning to his phonograph "I just got my hands on a new recording of *The Magic Flute* It s the same Victor one of course but I d worn my old one out. They re harder to find than gas stamps right now

Or something to eat in this house Quarles prodded gently but Bootmaker evidently did not hear him

It s your own fault for mentioning opera again Spartan said "How does one get the Flip boy in here?

Gone to bed Bootmaker called over having heard that much You ll find more Scotch in that cabinet to your left Spart.

Where s the kitchen? Spartan asked Quarles I ll go brew us some coffee

Down the hall a ways Quarles said. "And fry up some chicken while you re at it Or at least, make some sandwiches would you?

Sure And into Spartan s mind came the scrubbed diet kitchen at the Gap where first he and then later Lincoln And Lee had perked innumerable cups of coffee and made bulky sandwiches out of the prison baked bread He sat for an instant lost in the memories of an ascetic life before returning again to the present

could remember your reason for naming her Isolde Quarles was saying to Bootmaker Since Wagner bores you

As Spartan rose to find the kitchen he saw Bootmaker carefully slide a pile of records on the spindle his face wry I still had the musical taste of a Rotarian then If she had been born one year later' —a record dropped and music that sounded as though it had been precisely carved from ice came up behind his voice— I d have named her Papagena And a year earlier—Gilda

In other words the poor girl didn t have a chance any way you look at it Spartan said tossing his words back over his shoulder as he went through the door

There are worse names a rather nasal feminine voice said beside him How did you come by your first name Doctor McClintock?

Standing before the hallway mirror in her fur jacket, she was re-

placing her lipstick before going in to join her father Tall and thin she made him tighten inside because she was so like Imagene in her arrogance a girl who was almost, but not quite as arresting as she calmly assumed she was

Then in the next moment when she turned to him with a smile that was an artful alloy of disdain and cordiality and he realized that her features were not like Imagene s at all he was still shocked to discover that here was the first woman he had felt he must have in over fifteen years Stop staring at her he warned himself while the back of his mind made the acquisitive statement This one I ve got to have—this one I ve had coming to me for a long long time

"You are Doctor McClintock aren t you? she was asking noting his attraction to her coolly Dad s mentioned you I m Isolde Bootmaker"

"Yes I thought you must be" he heard himself saying stupidly Yes you would have to be Bootmaker s daughter wouldn t you? He searched for something piquant to say something to hold her there for a moment longer But even as he was doing it, she had shrugged off her jacket revealing thin bare shoulders and was going past him into the library His mission to the kitchen completely forgotten Spartan followed right behind her She was so slim that her shoulder blades jutted like vestigial wings and he had to restrain himself from putting his hands on them familiarly and running his fingertips over the sharply shadowed ridges

"Hi there Counselor she said to Quent Quarles and at the same time Bootmaker his records forgotten, was coming towards her ardent as a lover saying I thought you d be in a little earlier——"

In noisy delight Quarles cried Now let s not have a rehash of the Face on the Barroom Floor Doctor Tell the truth Iseult, you came rushing home because you knew I d be here"

"Oh natch Isolde said yawning behind her hand Her voice was slightly jangling like a piano that is too well tempered "Will someone cigarette me please?

Spartan barely got to the silver box first only to find it empty Grinning, Quarles produced a rumpled pack while Bootmaker said formally Isolde this is my assistant, Doctor McClintock."

"We met in the hall Isolde said Please sit down Doctor" Under the lamp her rather colorless hair took on a becoming reddish tinge and her lashes mascara coated, were nevertheless bronze at the base

She turned her gaze from Spartan not rudely but with the instinctive shrinking of the young from the fustiness of the middle aged Then she grinned gaminlike at her father Dad I hope you three haven t finished off all that lovely Scotch I kept saving room all evening so I could have a nightcap when I got home "

Can t think of any girl I d rather ply with likker " Quarles said Hoary go get us some ice we re running low "

Hoary? Isolde cried nasally Is that what they re calling you these days Dad?"

I m afraid I started that one Spartan said and was rewarded with another of her polite glances

"Oh don t pay any attention to him little Iseult " Quarles said grabbing for her hand He went on with his banter for some time while Bootmaker beamed fatuously and Spartan enjoyed the notion that Quarles was making an ass of himself

a look at McClintock glowering over there " Quarles was saying Handsome cuss isn t he? But no depth no—— C'mon let s go get that ice and fix you a drink

Fuming Spartan thought I m surprised Bootmaker allows Quarles to horse around like that And I m damn disappointed in the girl—she s a giggly thing But when he and Bootmaker were alone he said carefully You ve a very charming daughter And she s very pretty

I live for that kid of mine Spart She s just past twenty-one and Quent has known her almost all her life I think you know he has no children of his own "

Well I ve neither kith nor kin either Spartan said lightly while inside he raged If you think I m after that silly ewe lamb of yours Bootmaker you re mistaken Nor while we re on the subject do I happen to be fifty as you and Quent are I ll be thirty nine this month—thirty nine could that be true? The clock inside him must be slow

The sound of a piano from the back of the house made him start Bootmaker got to his feet hastily saying Want you to hear Isolde play great talent

"It s pretty late Spartan demurred I think I d better be——

Oh come on you don t want to have a tin ear all your life!

Well I still——" he began again and then found himself trotting obediently down the hall after Bootmaker

The piano an enormous ebony thing about to take flight was the main feature of the room they entered There were a few chairs some tables with ash trays and no other furniture A music room for God s sake was this what Hoary used to risk his freedom and his neck for?

Isolde stopped playing and began to wash her hands in the air looking past Quent at Spartan Anything you d like to hear Doctor McClintock? she asked sweetly as though he were doddering and at the same time a backward candidate for the first grade

I think some Chopin Bootmaker said tactfully hastily

I hope the hell Spartan thought remembering Dublin s lady music teacher and the coed musicians of Western she doesn t throw her head in the air and get that soulful look on her face

Isolde did

Her rapt fervor both annoyed and stirred him It occurred to him that the expression was one a woman should wear only in the most intimate moments of her life and once the analogy had come to his mind he could not rid himself of it Under other circumstances were she to turn that look on him my God he thought and turned his head slightly so that Bootmaker could not see him Under other circumstances were she to turn that look on him and All right I want her he stated to himself emphatically but without emotion I want her despite her bored girlish mannerisms and her old man and what Quent Quarles or anyone else including Isolde herself might think of it I don t know whether it s because she s where I left off when they sent me to the Gap or just because Bootmaker has spoiled her with money and she s the epitome of the kind of girl I ve wanted all my life All I know is that she excites me just to look at her and if thats being half in love with her whatever that means so be it

He was aware of her music as such only after she had excused herself and gone up to bed Then having accepted a ride home with Quarles he found his head ringing with it

Quite a girl that Isolde " Quarles said driving rather erratically through the empty streets

Oh—pretty attractive Spartan said loftily but juvenile "

Hell she s still in college Spart

She s still in her cocoon you mean There are kids all over the

place, younger than Isolde Bootmaker who re earning their livings bedding down with their boy friends and acting like adults in general —and with a lot less fuss than it takes to light Isolde s cigarette "

"Oh I ll admit that Hoary s holding her back quite a lot. He s terrified to face the day when she'll find herself a husband and leave him Besides he s all for her going on the concert stage "

Is she that good?

"Ommm who knows? Least of all Isolde until she gets up the guts to strike out for herself and find out. But I think in the long run she d be better off married " He swung back over the double line to his lane and continued thoughtfully And the sooner the better Sh- s loaded with sex "

"Oh well Spartan was airy "As far as that goes she could put her shoes under my bed and so forth "

'Yeah Spart I sort of gathered that Better not let Hoary know though Or for that matter " he added strangely me And don t get me wrong on that last.

Certainly not What was her mother like?" Spartan said, wisely he felt altering the subject

"Oh all right I guess That s how I met Hoary incidentally He came to me for a divorce after his wife had gone on a cross-country bat for over a year She was a cabaret singer and the grape nut crowd drove her to distraction After that Hoary buckled down to his practice and decided to make money

'Yes I know what you mean

Frankly I thought he was crazy to take the risks he did and I still do

And he still is Spartan said

"Sure well if you re the howling success I think you re going to be Spart Hoary can play along with you and lay off the other At least I hope so

"Damn right he s going to lay off the other Spartan began heatedly and then nervousness seized him God I hope this thing doesn t fizzl- out tomorrow night After all the money Hoary's spent, and your work and the vitamins end of it—it would be one mess if it did

"You'll be great," Quarles said heartily You'll have those bags in orgasms Spart In fact it is my considered opinion that you re going to make yourself a pile of dough, and you'll deserve every penny

of it. After what you ve been through—— Hey is this the dump you live in?"

"Yes Thanks a lot Quent. What do you mean, what I've——

Quarles looked at Spartan innocently Why I mean a place called Massacre Gap Spart. A prison mining-camp isn t my idea of a place to spend a thirteen year vacation

"But I didn t work in the mine Spartan blurted in his surprise

"No? Well my source couldn t tell me that, of course" Quarles laughed at Spartan s chagrin "Never trust a lawyer They re always curious and they ve always got ways of finding out

"Have you told Bootmaker?

"Why hell no! Quarles said angrily What d you think I am un ethical or something? That s your business And—since I m your attorney and I helped you get your certificate—I had to make it mine Well good night and good luck pal I'll be down at the symposium rooting like hell for you later on today

'You and me both Spartan said We'll celebrate after" With an indifference that was entirely assumed now that the time was almost upon him he strode towards his darkened apartment house

Great guy Quent he thought. He ll keep his mouth shut I think But he s kidding himself if he thinks that the act he puts on around Isolde is paternal Oh the hell with Isolde!

Got to get some money first Got to get myself every damn thing I ever wanted in life or it won t be worth it to me And after that—I ll get around to attending to Isolde later

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Most of Sunday had been quite warm the sun burning through a sea of smog that lay motionless over the city but in later afternoon a brisk breeze came in from the ocean to dispel the "inversion" and bend the palm trees lining the avenues By eight that evening the clean wind had whipped people almost into a holiday mood and the crowd milling about the auditorium was in that state of uncontrolled high spirits which can turn into the wildest enthusiasm given the slightest provocation

The talk dwelt considerably on that exciting Dr Spartan Mc Clintock you know the one who was assisting Dr Bootmaker until

the routine details of getting his own license were attended to Some insisted that Dr McClintock was from Scotland but it was announced by none other an authority than Mrs Powell that he was indeed from Georgia or some place at any rate he was American And so charming! Not to mention brilliant yes brilliant for had not Ives Stanhope the famous scenarist stated unequivocably at lunch just today with Mrs Montrose that Dr McClintock was in his estimation one of the Foremost Thinkers of today? And had not Professor Phoebe Kidd—how old? Oh I say about thirty six well she looks it anyway—why Professor Kidd herself admitted that she felt Healthopathy—oh is that how you pronounce it? Hell thop-athy—anyway it s a Boon Well it seems to be a new kind of natural healing no nothing to do with the spine I don t think What I got from the professor was this she said that last night Dr McClintock told her in all confidence that Healthopathy was actually founded on the very principles of sane natural diet that she herself has been telling us about all these years! So although Dr McClintock is a graduate Healthopathist his education has been along lines that she herself has already traveled she really blazed the trails for him so to speak and she could truthfully call herself a *practical* Healthopathist! Oh no I didn t hear Dr McClintock say it this was at a conference they had last night at Dr Bootmaker s But she told me today at Mrs Montrose s luncheon

Fragments of such conversations and others were related duly to Dr McClintock by one Quentin Quarles as Dr McClintock stood before a mirror backstage meticulously combing his hair prior to facing the house I ll kill that lying bitch! Dr McClintock muttered If she thinks she s going to horn in——

Perhaps a quiet discussion of the matter would silence her Quent Quarles said suggestively Say some night in bed

It is doubtful if Dr McClintock even heard for he was staring at his reflection curiously as though he were confronting and judging a stranger He had the feeling that time had become pleated like a paper fan and could he but push the ends together he would again be an angry scornful hungry wreck out there in one of the first few rows waiting for the carnival of charlatans to begin

Like twins in telepathic rapport he watched himself go out on the stage and take his seat smiling the while graciously to the applause To the left of him sat the Doctors Knox and Preebles and beyond

them was the empty chair of the Chairman Dr Horace V Bootmaker who was at the lecture stand making jolly gestures of appeal for the applause to cease

When there was comparative silence Dr Bootmaker chortled "Thank you thank you Ladies and gentlemen! Tonight it is my great pleasure to open the Second National Health Symposium and to welcome you to an evening that will live in your memories forever Tonight on this very platform with me are three of the most eminent health authorities in this sorely embattled world Tonight you will hear words of wisdom

Oh get on with it, Hoary Dr McClintock thought sharply

health in mind and body through Natural Living and Natural Thought Thank you on our panel tonight we have Dr Knox K Knox world authority on the pathology of autointoxication Dr Knox!

"Next to Dr Knox is Dr Wilson Preebles Dr Preebles is fresh from a lecture tour of our great Southwest, where he astounded the medical world with his findings on Vaccination Sickness and related *diseases Dr Preebles!*

'Thank you

Our final speaker of the evening—and I take great great pride in making this announcement—will be the eminent authority known throughout Europe and the

Blabbermouth Dr McClintock said to him silently

a man whose courage and audacity whose dedication whose humility whose never-ceasing labors under the most trying of circumstances have combined to produce methods of healing that verge on the miraculous

Whose mission here tonight is to bring to you the new and tremendously vital teachings of the world renowned Doctrine of Healthopathy—Doctor Spartan McClintock!

Dr Spartan McClintock as he rose to take his introductory bow was the personification of the word *natty* Confident and virile he stood in urbane acknowledgment of his applause He was, quite naturally smiling but there was about him an air of seriousness and determination that enhanced his physical appearance for without this aura of dedication he would have been merely an attractive man in a dark blue pin-stripe double-breasted suit a suit that had been subtly but nevertheless deliberately, too precisely tailored. He looked

a bit like the bright young banker who has in him the seeds of em bezzlement like the genius scientist who may turn mad and blow up the world he looked for no ascribable reason both devout and dan gerous and the Faithful sensing this welcomed him with a delicious excitement

'Thank you I will conclude by introducing myself I am Horace V Bootmaker thank you and by telling you of our new format for this evening s program After the speakers have concluded their portion there will be a short intermission And fol lowing the intermission we will conduct a question and answer forum Questions may be addressed to the speakers as well as myself and a team of technicians will be down on the floor and in the gallery with microphones I have great confidence that you will find this the most stimulating and thought provoking symposium ever conducted anywhere or at any time!

And now it is my pleasure to introduce our first eminent speaker of the evening Dr Knox!

During Dr Knox s fumblings at the lecture stand Dr Spartan McClintock was seen to pull up his left sock as furtively as possible immediately thereafter to settle into a deep study of some knotty in tellectual problem And although Dr Knox s opening remarks were startling enough Have you eliminated properly today? I want you to ask yourself that question without reservation Have I fully and properly eliminated today? And then having asked there was something drawing about Dr McClintock as he sat brooding and worrying his clean shaven lip

Occasionally as Dr Knox bumbled along Dr McClintock roused himself politely only to return to his musings It was an interesting *performance* that and it *proved a distraction* albeit not an unwel come one

have found fecal stones in the colon that had been putre fying there for twenty years Dr Knox shouted wagging his Van Dyke And upon producing these stones for them my patients have said in surprise to me Why Doctor I don t see how this can be! I eliminate every single day! And to that I must answer Yes but do you eliminate *properly?*

Because of the question and answer period the time allotted to each speaker was shorter than that of the previous symposium and after Dr Knox had been eliminated and Dr Preebles was finishing

up in a voice of outrage and for no reason that anyone could determine using the French phrase *j'accuse* Dr McClintock was seen to emerge from his cogitations and to lean forward alertly

" *J accuse* the medical doctors of inoculating little children with leprosy! Yes and erysipelas syphilis and abscesses And why? Because in their blundering stupidity they have come to believe that germs are the primary causes of disease! When any rational ten year old could tell you that a healthy spine means a healthy human and a displaced spine means a sick human *J accuse* the medical doctors of persecuting humanity as well as we of the newer and true healing professions *J accuse* the A M A and Morris Fishbein of suppression and criminal discrimination

Briefly Dr McClintock was seen to grin.

And then Dr Preebles was mopping his forehead and taking his seat and the time had come for Healthopathy to be introduced to an auditorium packed with people who richly deserved it

There was a suitable bustle as Dr Spartan McClintock H D strode to the speaker s stand a twittering rather like the excitement of laboratory mice just before feeding time From the balcony came a spontaneous spattering of applause as though Dr McClintock had executed a neat buck and wing on his journey to the stand Dr Mc Clintock bowed, looked towards the wings and waved his hand Two ancient genies clad in mundane coveralls and pushing a huge chart stand between them appeared The cover sheet of the chart was unadorned with the exception of a large gold *H* printed on it When the stand had reached the point where it blocked the Doctors Knox and Preebles almost completely from view Dr McClintock gestured to his genies to halt

"That will be fine he was heard to murmur over the mike His genies grinning doltishly out at the audience retired from the limelight.

Another rustle and those who peeped once more at their programs learned no more than they had before except that Doctor McClintock was to speak on 'The Kineticodynamics of Health opathy

Ladies and gentlemen Dr McClintock suddenly boomed and eminent members of this panel With your kind permission *I am going to refute everything that so far has been said here tonight!* I do this not out of animosity not out of pride but out of a burning zeal that

will not brook anything less than complete scientific truth! I know the truth—I have studied and worked for years to learn it—and I am going to pass it on to you tonight If I did anything less I would not consider myself worthy of those two most precious letters of all that follow my name Aich dee, Doctor of Healthopathy

I make these preliminary remarks so that you will understand if I become seemingly harsh seemingly cruel seemingly intolerant I must be intolerant soldiers are always intolerant of the enemy and I am a one man army in the battle to bring Healthopathy to you and to this entire nation

And too—— Here Dr McClintock lowered his voice somewhat I am not a new recruit to this battle I have been in it from the earliest skirmishes I am an old soldier and like an old soldier perhaps I am bitter I have seen too much gone through too much to stand before you tonight smiling and polite Men have been tortured and killed in the defense of Healthopathy and others like myself have barely escaped

I say others but I am not sure whether there is anyone alive but myself in this entire world to carry Healthopathy to the people Perhaps I am entirely alone and the battle entirely mine

After this passionate outburst Dr McClintock seemed unable to continue for a moment Then speaking so emotionally that his words came out of the loudspeakers in a harsh whisper he said ' It is more than a privilege to bring Healthopathy to you—it is a duty a sacred promise to the martyred dead

After a brief struggle Dr McClintock managed to get himself in hand again I think first I should tell you a bit about the history of Healthopathy and its founders before I go into Healthopathy itself It will not take more than a few minutes of our time for the story of Healthopathy is painfully tragically brief

Healthopathy was born in the mind of that great genius Boris Plotkin a man who had pursued diligently all his life the secrets of Natural Healing In the early thirties Doctor Plotkin was conducting a clinic in Heidelberg Germany Although he was using the accepted methods of Natural Healing gradually he grew dissatisfied with his results He needed he came to realize some consistent program of healing that would benefit each and every patient each and every time He wanted the mathematical precision of the civil engineer of the astronomer and when he had reached that point in his thinking

he came across the key to Healthopathy For the one fact that has been ignored by all seekers after the truth of healing finally burst on him with a blinding light If the stars and planets in the sky follow mathematically deducible courses if every inanimate substance on this earth including the earth itself exists in its mathematical relationship to every other substance—does it not follow that there must be a mathematics of the living substances of the universe? A mathematics or wave mechanics of the flesh?

Could it be otherwise?

You ll be asking them next if they ve eliminated properly Dr McClintock warned himself get on with it

knew at once that when the equations had been derived that governed the flesh of healthy bodies it would be but a step to derive those of diseased flesh And knowing those of both health and illness there would lie in the difference the clue to the cure

Doctor Plotkin immediately wrote a paper on his findings which paper was finally published in an obscure scientific magazine By chance I happened to read his monograph I recognized immediately that *here was the truth!* And here was the teacher I wanted to follow I left my home my friends and all that I held dear and went to join Doctor Plotkin There were finally three of us who developed Healthopathy under the guidance of Doctor Plotkin There was Doctor Conklin and Doctor Meunch and myself

In 1939 Healthopathy came to the attention of the Nazis Boris Plotkin was arrested as well as Doctor Meunch They were ordered to deliver up the records of Healthopathy to the Nazi medical doctors Both refused

Doctor Plotkin is dead—murdered Doctor Meunch was sent to the experimental ward in a concentration camp and was used as a human guinea pig by the medical doctors I do not know whether he is dead or alive Both Doctor Conklin and myself had to flee the country I have been unable to find whether he made his escape or *not*

'That is the history of Healthopathy Glorious and tragic I—I now bring you the principles of Healthopathy itself

And about time Dr McClintock told himself severely

As I told you Healthopathy is the accurate mathematical study of the human body in disease and health I cannot go into involved formulae here but I can give you the basic reasoning behind them

First of all —Dr McClintock moved away from the speaker's stand towards the chart mike in hand— it was discovered that each human being has his own particular kinetic balance That is each person when in perfect health has his own equation that applies to him alone However his kinetic balance may be similar to that of another so that the two could be classed together loosely In all there are some eighteen classes or shall we say some eighteen equations that can be applied to the different physical types in the world

Now then what is kinetic balance?

Dr McClintock flipped over the cover page of the chart to reveal the representation of a skinned human being We have here the gross anatomy of the body Picking up a pointer he continued 'The body is grossly composed of skin—bone—organs—nerves—a circulatory system—muscle—and so forth This is what we call the *physical* anatomy of the body Now I m going to show you——"

Another page was flipped over

the *kinetic* anatomy of the body"

What seemed to be some kind of table was revealed to the audi ence Under columns headed Organic Components' Inorganic Components Hormonal Components Intra active or Syner gistic Components and Factor X Components were listed with many arrows darting randomly about the chart the names of min erals hormones vitamins proteins enzymes nucleoproteins nucleic acids and obscure materials designated as Binders and variously, Primaries Secondaries and 'Tertiarys

This Dr McClintock repeated loudly is the kinetic anatomy of the body This representation includes the gross anatomy I showed you first plus—*plus* the *physiology* of the body In other words on this one chart we have the empirical representation of gross anatomy which is the structure of the body and—*and!* the empirical representation of the physiology or the functioning of the body To put it very simply——

Yes do that Dr McClintock urged himself skeptically

numbers in the equations are the gross anatomy and the equations themselves the Healthopathic physiology Now having finally assorted our eighteen classes we were ready to start the first step in determining the equations which must of necessity represent every type of illness or disease And knowing that the ki netics of the body are dependent on the kinetic components —here

a sweeping gesture of the pointer to include the entire chart—"it followed that all illness lay or had its seat in the kinetic balance of those components"

Turning from his chart Dr McClintock took three paces forward and halted I want to repeat that he shouted ALL DISEASE OF EVERY TYPE FORM OR CLASS IS DUE TO ONE THING AND ONE THING ONLY ILLNESS IS THE DIRECT PRIMARY AND INEVITABLE RESULT OF KINETIC IMBALANCE IN THE HUMAN BODY It is not due except very indirectly to spinal subluxations it is not due except equally indirectly to autointoxication nor to germs bacteria or anything else HEALTHOPATHY IS FOUNDED ON THIS TRUTH ALL OTHER SCHOOLS OF HEALING WHETHER SO-CALLED NATURAL HEALING OR NOT ARE BASED ON (I must needs be harsh!) UNTRUTHS OR CRIMINAL FALSEHOODS!

"It follows Dr McClintock went on more quietly "that each disease would have its own equation also And in the discrepancy between the health-equation and the disease-equation lies the key to the therapy-equation From a tedious compilation of those components still present in the body—the imbalansate—we slowly derived our therapy-equations

These therapy-equations or formulae ladies and gentlemen now number in the high hundreds

And as a result of our work Healthopathy can now promise radiant good health and vigorous longevity to every person in this auditorium to every person in the country and at our victorious conclusion of the great war in which we are engaged, to every human being in the world Oh can t you see the future generations prospering in a free world? Free of dictatorships free of diseases of pain of——

And having said little that was sensible so far Dr McClintock proceeded to spew gibberish at the fascinated audience for the remainder of his allotted time He repeated himself outrageously hammed rehashed Healthopathy blithely and all in all did quite splendidly

Either because he was dynamic and handsome or because he was new and brash or because of these and a certain further but very faint glimmer of intelligence that was allowed to escape from behind his façade of the quack—whatever the reason his talk was concluded to an overwhelming ovation

He bowed innumerable times and then went over to flip the pages of his chart back to their original positions The curlicued golden *H* on its field of white was revealed again to the Faithful like the raising of the Eucharist And below the chart stand as though incongruously belonging to it could be seen the feet of the Doctors Knox and Preebles the rest of the two gentlemen still being lost to view

Dr Bootmaker rose to announce the intermission and before he had finished speaking a corps of boys carrying leaflets advanced from all parts of the auditorium to distribute them

The leaflets bore the following messages

KINETABS 7*

Kinetabs are the natural kinetic components discovered through the science of Healthopathy Kinetabs are composed of Nature s own pure Components alone They are scientifically compounded in the Healthopathy Laboratories and contain no coal tar substances or any other cancer producing materials To maintain your Kinetic Balance to preserve your health and prolong your life to continue for years and perhaps for life, in a *glowing irresistible* youthfulness take Kinetabs No 7

Health! Vigor! Virility! Youth! Success!

KINETABS 7

* Kinetabs 7 are now on sale at a booth in the lobby for your convenience Or you may call or write Healthopathy Clinic Beverly Hills California

On the inside page the tone was more pithy

HEALTHOPATHIC DIAGNOSTIC AND THERAPEUTIC CLINIC
Beverly Hills Calif

Dr Spartan McClintock H D,
Director

A complete Healthopathic diagnosis of your kinetic-component imbalance and therapeutic treatments are now being offered by Dr Spartan McClintock himself No diagnosis or treatment you have so far undertaken has restored your health *There is only one way to cure disease or ill health and that way lies through*

kinetic adjustment Call or come in yourself *at once* for *your* Kineticodiagnosis and Adjustment You will not know the joys of radiant good health until you do Act now!

Healthopathic Diagnostic and Therapeutic Clinic
Spartan McClintock H D Director
Horace V Bootmaker D E M Nonaffiliate Ass

It was reported backstage to an overweening Dr McClintock to a smirking Dr Bootmaker and to the disgruntled Doctors Knox and Preebles that a near riot was taking place in the lobby To under state the matter the salesbooth was doing a brisk business in Kinetabs 7

And in an aside Quent Quarles said admiringly to Spartan I swear I still don t see how you ever got away with calling Hoary a nonaffiliate ass!

To which Spartan only grinned evilly and said Don t let me down on that wave mechanics question Quent I aim to anesthetize them with that one

Dr McClintock was not disappointed in his surmise that the question and answer period would be taken up almost entirely by himself He had prepared especially for several types of questions and they were all duly asked Spartan said No he couldn t mend a broken hip No he wasn t a Jew No he wasn t a Nazi Yes he thought Naprapathy was sincere but erroneous—so was Chiropractic and Kinetabs were most certainly not just vitamins! (The questioner sounded exactly like Professor Phoebe Kidd)

Then Quent Quarles dutifully asked

QUESTION Doctor you mentioned something about wave mechanics I think Does that mean everybody vibrates or something?

ANSWER Not in the way you re thinking of Actually at the beginning of our work our mathematician Doctor Conklin first tried to relate the functions of the single cell as repre sented by the molecules of which it is composed, through the application of the old quantum theory But about that time another German mathematician Born of Gottingen revealed that the kinematical concepts—they are time and space—are

different within the molecule and especially the atom than in other measurable large scale events In other words developing on this Doctor Conklin discovered that the space time measurements of the entire body differ from the single cell, and those of the cell from the molecule Once this was realized we changed our kinematical ratios and were able to progress upwards from the atom to the molecule the molecule to the cell the cell to the tissue the tissue to the organ and so forth

Everyone was so all out impressed by the answer to that one that Dr McClintock visibly preened by requesting humorously "Next question?

They laughed fondly They loved him

At the close of the symposium the Faithful stormed backstage Quent had only time to shout in Spartan s ear We re all going out for a little celebration in your honor Spart——" before the battle was joined He looked about for Bootmaker and discovered his partner fighting valiantly and at the same time exuding a verbal effluvium of inanities Preebles and Knox chins aquiver were as busy as waiters after a banquet gathering up the lesser lights the pensioners and here and there the genuinely ill

Spartan suddenly submitted to glory and found that whatever its source it was painless Exhilarating in fact Doctor McClintock Doctor McClintock Doctor Spartan McClintock!

He forgot for almost five minutes that it was only Doctor Spartan McClintock H D

At the exit to the building he managed to gasp to Bootmaker, Where s Isolde?

She didn t attend Bootmaker said briefly and plunged into his Lincoln Continental

Oh He climbed into Quarles s car destituting the Faithful and bringing to an end the opening night of his new career

iii

In the morning Spartan slipped through the rear door to the clinic and into his own newly fitted office Although he was at the other end of the hall from Bootmaker s domain and the reception room he

could hear the hubbub going on there From the box on the desk Miss Gaily s voice was insisting metallicly Doctor McClintock' Doc—— to Spartan s amusement

He changed into his whites and went down the hall to Bootmaker s office As he passed the reception room Ives Stanhope skittered out and came to an abrupt halt Oh good morning Doctor Doctor that reception nurse of yours is positively outrageous' I was here before half those people out there were and she refuses to give me an appointment before Wednesday And you know well enough Doc tor how serious my condition is and I must have my diagnosis as soon——

You ll have it this morning Mr Stanhope Spartan said smartly "I'll tell the nyrse myself Look we ve a nice quiet sitting room right over there magazines and so forth Suppose you wait there if you re not busy this morning and I'll slip you in the minute I can

Ives Stanhope burbled his gratitude and obeyed

And relax will you? Spartan called back Can t have you ex cited when I make your kinetograph' Very sensitive instrument you know And don t he added to himself have a hemorrhage all over the clinic for God s sake Remembered Miracle he thought wryly seems to have suffered a relapse Ah well he won t have to worry about paying to have it published now Tough titty Phoebe ole girl

He opened Bootmaker s door without knocking

Spart! Bootmaker shouted Close the door and come in here Man you ve done it' Let s get rolling

Start the music Spartan said feeling a bumptiousness in spite of himself We ll show the Boys a real game of musical quacks Tell Miss Gaily to get the first patient ready in Number One Then you start in Number Two and when my kinetograph s drying I ll look in on your patient Then you just stand around and look important while I read the graphs

All right with me Spart We ll stack them up that way

In Number One his first patient already in her smock was smok ing nervously As Spartan greeted her he noticed that from her alli gator bag there protruded a gold cigarette case with a diamond pressed into one corner He frowned Tsk tsk Mrs Montrose Smoking before your Kineticodiagnosis' Now I ll have to make ad justments and correct for it

In response Mrs Montrose filled her lungs with smoke before

she realized what she was doing Spartan looked up from the case history taken by Miss Gaily Please dear lady, I m going to be an gry with you in a minute

Mrs Montrose gathered herself together and dutifully gave over the cigarette to Miss Gaily Seated as she was on a chair between two tables of awesome apparatus she exhibited the apprehension that follows after being extremely impressed Oh I hope" she sighed that we can really find out what s wrong with me this time I ve suffered so much no one will ever know and then to be told by those idiot medical doctors that there s nothing—— Oh that s cold!"

Spartan removed the stethoscope from her chest and went around to the back Will you cough please Mrs Montrose Again "

I went to Doctor Knox and he did help for a while but——"

Please Mrs Montrose no talking from now on Let s see Miss Gaily has already gotten your sample—— Oh yes And you have the tambour attached to your chest Um hum We re almost ready to take your kinetograph Mrs Montrose Now I must caution you to be very quiet but relaxed No talking and if possible try not to move about in the chair

He concluded his examination and decided that she was as sound as a dollar and of infinitely greater value Now put your left hand on the rest there That s good He strapped a rubber bag to the arm from which tubing went to a piece of apparatus And just slide you right hand into the collar of the big glass tube there No it s all right it s just pure distilled water It transmits certain vibrations you see And let me check the chest tambour once more Miss Gaily please will you start the drum Now relax Mrs Mont rose

Mrs Montrose whimpered with ecstasy

It was obvious that the Erlanger apparatus attached to Mrs Mont rose s left arm the hydrosphygmograph into which her right was thrust and the pneumograph of Marey on her chest (all plus many meaningless dials and blinking red lights) were both frightening and titillating her almost to the point of fainting Completely rigid she moved only her eyes to watch the drums covered with smoked paper go slowly around while a metal stylus scratched out on their sur faces merely her systolic pressure her volume pulse and the jagged rise and fall of her respiration

As Spartan had surmised these routine tests run by every student of physiology in his school course were most impressive to the un initiated

Miss Gaily who had previously been instructed in her duties but not in their minor significance watched the tracing of the kymographs equally spellbound The drums were timed together and stopped automatically at the completion of one revolution All right Miss Gaily" Spartan snapped officiously you will remove the chest tambour and help Mrs Montrose —he smiled at his patient briefly and tenderly— free herself He began to remove the kymographs from the drums And have Mrs Montrose in my office in a half hour for her reading

He strode from the room kymographs held out from him gingerly Then in a cubbyhole walled off for the purpose he dipped them in rapid-drying shellac and hung them from the line to dry He had now time to drop in on Bootmaker help him a bit and then do another patient before Mrs Montrose came bulge-eyed into his office for the results of her Kineticodiagnosis

He rather enjoyed puttering with the graphs and sitting at his desk further studying those of Mrs Montrose he amused himself by plot ting a meaningless graph for her and connecting the points by tracing along a new plastic French curve When he frowned and again studied the thin white tracings on her graph Mrs Montrose momentarily suspended breathing

Abruptly Spartan flung up his head and accused her sternly You have a very serious imbalance Mrs Montrose Very I ll have to set you on a rigid course of therapy for at least a month and then do another Kineticodiagnosis to see how you re responding After that—after that, you re going to have to take better care of yourself young lady

Mrs Montrose was a very very happy woman What do I have Doctor?

Imbalance of course

"Oh But I meant what kind of disease?

Healthopathy recognizes the terms for disease only as very loose designations I prefer to be accurate and I know you ll want it that way too so I will say that you have a type thirty six imbalance and that your case is severe

Oh dear' Mrs Montrose said blissfully

He filed her charts and kymographs flipping them about ostentatiously He turned on the desk box and said Miss Morgan, will you bring in a number two hundred box of Kinetabs thirty-six'

Whether Horace Bootmaker cared for the term or not, Mrs Montrose was going to be considerably jazzed up for as long as she continued to consume her Kinetabs For her original formula Spartan had decided on a multiple vitamin and mineral capsule with emphasis on B_1 and iron He smiled thinking of the gold pill box she would undoubtedly buy within an hour of leaving his office

Before she left he made an appointment for her for the next visit She swayed towards him and languished luxuriously clutching her Kinetabs Oh Doctor McClintock I believe in you absolutely'

And I believe in you Mrs Montrose In your courage and determination to get well

He ushered her out preventing a further exchange of impassioned declarations

Mrs Montrose s bill would come to one hundred dollars for that one visit fifty for the Kineticodiagnosis and fifty for her bottle of Kinetabs Those patients who had not the wealth of Mrs Montrose would pay exactly half that figure For like Bootmaker Spartan had come to believe that to place a high price on an article increases its intrinsic value for the purchaser as well as its monetary value Milch them Bootmaker had said pontifically and they ll respect you for it and come back for more

He gave Ives Stanhope his Kineticodiagnosis just before noon and after bawling him out ruthlessly sent the tuberculous writer home to bed And stay there Spartan added for the entire month you re taking your first course of Kinetabs Your imbalance is so great that you re going to need every ounce of strength you have for internal exertion By that I mean that while you re lying prone your body will be working constantly to utilize the therapeutic components you ll be taking in and readjusting itself to new vibrational relationships And I mean *stay in bed* Eat in bed use a bedpan don t read or write—no work whatsoever—radio one hour a day no more and no newscasts and no sex I ll make out your diet for your manservant You may have visitors for one half hour three times a week and

that includes Professor Kidd I m sorry Stanhope this is just between us men of course but——"

"Of course" Ives breathed amorously

" but the professor is not licensed to practice medicine in this state So you ll have to follow my orders explicitly and no one else s *if you expect to recover And the first time you re to get out of bed is* when I tell you to and no sooner! I ll drop around and check on you in the evenings"

"Doctor McClintock I can t tell you how——"

No go home to bed!

Oh yes Doctor Stanhope permitted himself one more yearn and departed

My God Spartan snickered to himself aren t I the brutal one though But he was worried about Ives Vitamins minerals and amino acids notwithstanding his recovery was dependent on total bed rest and Spartan was not sure he could keep the man down Moreover it would take at least at the very least a year

iv

He had forseen that all his patients would not be hypochondriacs or adoring tuberculars like Stanhope after all and so he had had com pounded a Kinetab that contained along with the usual vitamins and minerals a goodly quantity of sulfa The company which com pounded bottled and labeled the Kinetabs for him on a contractual basis was indifferent to the intents and purposes of its customers *However the company s research chemist Dr Stanley the earnest* Ph D seemed leery of Spartan s shot gun therapy pill

"So what if the state did have my Kinetabs picked up and analyzed? Spartan asked over his Shrimp Louis salad

Dr Stanley looked thoughtful "If they were merely analyzing for vitamin potency—nothing But I can t be sure they might not stum ble across the fact that the sulfa is present" He regarded his beer affectionately and drank deeply from the mug "Finding a bottle of Budweiser these days is a miracle You ever been to their plant in St Louis? Part of it s built like an old castle on the Rhine They conduct you through and give you free beer——"

I m giving you free beer Spartan pointed out. And a lunch to boot. Let s get back to Kinetabs"

My wife takes Number Sevenses Dr Stanley said, unruffled and added meditatively, blast her hide Most unbalanced woman you ever——

Send her over for a free diag—— Spartan broke off and laughed 'No seriously can t the company order more sulfa for me?

Dr Stanley shook his head "I m afraid not We ll compound your tablets and store your materials but you ll have to buy the drugs yourself

Oh all right I ve hired a pharmacist as a front for the Healthopathy Labs—maybe he can get it somehow His name is Charlie Utley—I'll send him around to talk to you

What does Quent Quarles say about the sulfa business? Dr Stanley asked

He told me the pure food and-drug angle isn t the one I have to worry about It s losing my license as a drugless practitioner if I get caught Ignoring the quizzical look on Stanley s face Spartan went on But what the hell I don t see how I can do without a certain amount of the stuff

I thought all your patients were going to be healthy ones"

Spartan sighed It doesn t quite work out that way

No I guess it wouldn t Dr Stanley motioned to a waitress for more beer appreciated her bosom briefly but thoroughly and returned to his host I heard you at the symposium last week

Spartan felt pleased for no reason You went to hear me huh? Well what did you think of it? Healthopathy I mean

Dr Stanley blushed

That s all right Spartan said tactfully it had to be bad to be good if you catch my meaning Oh say is this business about B_1 and alcoholism at all valid?

Dr Stanley solemnly assured him it was

Spartan beamed That little tip could bring every drunk in Beverly Hills pounding at my door

Just before they parted Dr Stanley said casually I was just thinking When that pharmacist of yours buys up the sulfa be sure to have him get several kinds Easier to get that way And another thing if you have an admixture of them you ve got two extra advantages You ll manage to hit more targets——

You mean a kind of blunderbuss therapy? Spartan said alertly

That s right And in the second place your Kinetabs would be

just that much harder to analyze Several different sulfas all mixed up with vitamins and amino acids I think it would be a lot safer—— Ee yipes look at the breastworks on that blonde! he urged

Spartan obliged

v

In its first month of existence the Healthopathy Clinic netted over seven thousand dollars By the middle of the second month it appeared as though the net would climb to ten thousand And as be fitted his position Doctor Spartan McClintock bought himself a fine medical library a Cadillac with only three thousand miles on it a course of driving lessons and rented a house in the Hollywood Hills

Healthopathy Laboratories did handsomely for itself also Kinetabs 7 were being retailed in health food stores and were also being dispensed by a number of drugless practitioners to their own patients

But aside from its money making propensities Healthopathy was benefitting mankind enormously Mrs Montrose bursting with vitamins took unto herself a lover fifteen years her junior Ives Stanhope lay abed and gained ten pounds Three pregnant ladies discovered they could face a plate of bacon and fried eggs in the morning without vomiting A gentleman with prostatitis was recovering satisfactorily under his regime of the blunderbuss Kinetabs Two drunks discovered that they could drink gluttonously eat a fistful of Kinetabs and awake in the morning comparatively hang-over free one of them actually began drinking less A Hollywood producer who had been starving to death on a bland ulcer diet felt more vitality than he had for years now that his kinetic balance was being restored Junior Powell of the purulent ears recovered completely this time and then proceeded to burst an eardrum diving sideways from the board into the family pool A lady with chronic sinus trouble found her head clearing after an orgy of vitamin A and another lady who had suffered four miscarriages in a row passed her third month successfully for the first time in her life (she swore passionately that the baby would have the middle name of Spartan were it a boy) And even another scrawny female who was also fed vitamin E stopped her divorce proceedings and reported cozily that her husband was no

longer repugnant to her in a certain way "Naturally" Spartan said blandly I told you that a kinetic imbalance can dull the emotions That has been factualized Incidentally I believe it would be advisable for your husband to have his Kineticodiagnosis also

There were many others among them the former vitamin deficients who were beginning to know a vigor and sense of well being for the first time in their lives

Spartan spent money and assured himself that he was having a helluva time

Quent Quarles introduced him to several young ladies who whatever their physical origins were spiritually indigenous to the territory surrounding Hollywood and Vine They called themselves models though they did not elucidate whether of garments or lickerish deportment Spartan took the blonde with hypochromic anemia to a night club where once he had taken Allie The brunette with the lieutenant s bars made into earrings he took to Ciro s Later he learned that one of them was married but he could never remember which

Also on Quarles s advice he retained the services of a publicity agent and items concerning his activities began to appear in the columns

Handsome Healthopathist Dr Spartan McClintock seen at local nitery and that wasn t lemonade he was drinking

Spartan called up his publicist and reprimanded him not about the lemonade but the personal description He was told obliquely but firmly to confine himself to gulling his patients and his publicist would take care of the public Bootmaker too was horrified but for another reason But Spartan said soothingly Look Hoary let s forget about the W C T U trade Leave them to the Boys what we want is the hard-drinking hard spending group that runs this town It s just as easy to love a rich hypochondriac as a pensioner you know

When he drove to his house in the Hills at one and two in the morning already half hung-over and with a busy day before him he had to reassure himself that he was having a helluva time Then unable to sleep he would prowl his front room with the bamboo furniture and the bamboo bar of which he was so proud There was another room off his bedroom to which he rarely had the time to go

The walls were lined with bookshelves and on a low table medical journals gathered dust.

He had surrounded himself with good men Dr Stanley Quarles his surly cynical publicist and even the sly merry Charlie It was enough that he saw and placated patients all day let someone else do the thinking for him

vi

Summer went by a long season in southern California wherein the desire for rain for one brief recess from a determined paradise becomes first an ache and finally an ever present undefinable nostalgia

But the nights are cool" people said to the tourists and even to each other when desperate "the nights are always cool."

"And the houses hot" Spartan complained Your place is like a hot box for half the night Hoary"

Bootmaker s was the usual meeting place for conferences Occasionally they went to Spartan s but Bootmaker s amused appraisal of the bamboo bar always infuriated Spartan inwardly Quarles s was out of the question as was Dr Stanley s The former s wife tried to play hostess and the latter s had a Siamese cat that bit Spartan

Spartan had instituted the conferences for he could not stop scheming. During the day almost each new patient suggested to him the need for another Kinetabs formula or raised the question of further uses for food accessories in Healthopathy "We can t let this thing bog down now!" was his constant cry and he always had some new grandiose idea in the way of expensive equipment or redecorating the offices

And as he talked and planned and dug knowledge and ideas from his associates he could hear Isolde in the back of the house at her piano playing playing playing

I d still like to get at her he thought. It irked him that she was unaware of his existence unless he took regular pains to remind her of it. Sometimes it seemed almost imperative that he have her otherwise he felt deprived

Instead Quent Quarles introduced him to a vapid starlet. She adored Spartan s bamboo bar and proved very accomplished in the

She wondered aloud why he had that dusty little room filled with all those books when he already knew so much in his head

VII

Someday there was going to come to him a patient whom he dared not treat himself and whom in all conscience he could not send out to the Boys Spartan told himself this occasionally and then forgot so that when the moment arrived he was preoccupied and barely listened She was a nondescript little woman emitting the endless plaint of the malingerer Spartan gave her a desultory examination noted that she was not well dressed that her Hollywood address was in the section south of the Boulevard and automatically wrote down Approximately fifty three when she gave her age as forty four

You say you have nervous indigestion? he said vainly trying to interrupt her whining

Well I just don t seem to digest what I eat Doctor Knox said I had lots of autointoxication and all——

Spartan looked up sharply Knox returning favors?

about the time I started my monthlies again

Started again? he said quickly

I thought I went through the change about five years ago But now well

Do you bleed regularly once every twenty-eight days?

No just any old time seems like Don t hurt none but I ve had this spinal subluxation for years that just kills me every time I——"

Forget about that When did this bleeding begin? How many months ago?

The woman grew vague This spring No—no it was right before Christmas I remember because——

Yes?

My husband had to go away on a business trip Oh I remember now He came back just before Christmas And when I woke up in the morning—there it was

You mean this bleeding occurs after intercourse

I guess so But other times too It don t bother me half so much as my spine though All this autointoxication and all would make anyone s spine crooked I guess but Doctor Knox kept——

He found himself staring at the impressive Kineticodiagnosis ap-

paratus So Knox had finally guessed that she might have a malignant tumor of the uterus But where could he send her—to Preebles who would diagnose her case as he virtually did 100 per cent of his cases as vaccination disease?

He sent her to wait in the reception room and then went to his office to call the County Medical Society He went over in his mind what to say to the M D to whom he would refer her My name s McClintock Doctor I m a drugless practitioner and I ve got a pa tient here in my office who needs medical attention at once She lives in your neighborhood and I d like to send her over to you right away This matter is beyond my——

Could you give me the name of a general practitioner in the Hollywood area? he said into the phone He took down the names and addresses and then interrupted suddenly What was that last name? I see no that s fine I have enough now thank you

In his excitement he dialed the wrong number twice before he got the one he wanted May I speak to Doctor Salpinger please? This is a personal call My name is Spartan—yes that s right Spartan—McClintock

There was a click a distant buzzing of voices and then a remem bered butterscotch tenor sang in his ear Fartin! Fartin McClin tock! Where in hell are you man?

In my office about three miles due west of you Spartan said After all these years—Milt

Well what are you doing? Are you living here? My God you in L A Where did you disappear to anyway? I wrote but you d already been—— Listen I got to see you Meet me for lunch?

Spartan named a restaurant near his office And listen Milt I m sending you a—oh never mind I ll tell you all about it when I see you

Lovely! Milt said gleefully Yes yes——

Lovely! Spartan shouted Milt I haven t thought of that word in I don t know how many years

He was at the restaurant first one he had chosen because it was expensive because it was popular and because the waiters were in variably insulting to those they did not recognize The producer with the ulcers had introduced Spartan into the coterie of the restaurant and he went there repeatedly as yet still unaware that the food was

execrable and the liquor more of an insult than the impudence of the help

Waiting at the bar over a Martini he felt the pull of eyes on his back In the company of a hothouse young man was a smiling beck oning Mrs Montrose Just beyond her he saw someone to whom the producer had introduced him

He table hopped boldly and then returned to his Martini enjoy ing that feeling of importance familiar to celebrities with plump minds Refusing to acknowledge it to himself he was nevertheless sorry that Milt had not arrived in time to see his performance then reflected in the bar mirror he saw a fat tired middle aged Jew searching for someone

Oh lord Spartan thought fleetingly just before Milt discovered him why did I ask him to meet me here?

Hi Spart Milt said easily Say you re looking mighty trig man

You re looking great! Spartan cried knowing his voice was too loud almost condescending He shook hands with Milt vigorously Here climb up beside me How about a Martini or two first?

Something was both puzzling and amusing Milt inwardly Under a lined forehead his eyes were studying Spartan affectionately yet ruefully But he said only Sorry I ll have to stick to coffee I ve got a tricky piece of surgery on for this aft

Spartan s manner lost its fatness he saw himself as having been obnoxious and Milt as having quietly unintentionally put him in his place Then let s go to our table Spartan said toning his voice down to Milt s God Milt —he meant it he meant it—"God but it s *good* to see you!

Milt had served in the Navy just over a year when he came down with malaria On his release he opened his new practice in Los Angeles a step he had contemplated taking prior to his enlistment He was enthusiastic about the West Coast he never wanted to see either snow or a hick town again He was working hard his practice was growing because of the shortage of doctors he was buying a house that was too expensive for him because his wife fell in love with it and because there was a huge playroom in the basement for his two children He was making more money than he ever had in his life and he still didn t know where it all went I've got to start sav

ing he said over his lunch if I'm to put those two kids of mine through med school one of these days"

"What flavor you got? Spartan said

Not missing the point, Milt said Boy and girl Ted s fourteen and Wendy s almost twelve

A little forethought Spartan observed and you d have spaced them four years apart That way only one of them would have been in school at a time

Now why didn t Nancy and I think of that? I don t know what could have been on our minds at the time Look Fartin we re letting this conversation deteriorate Come on tell me I know damn *well you re up to something more than just selling vitamins*

Well Spartan said abashed it s just that I ve been wondering how to explain it to you I—uh—really didn t run across your name just looking for prospects I called the County Medical because I wanted the name of someone to send a patient of mine to

Patient?

Uh huh I m a—a drugless practitioner now Milt

Milt looked blank for an instant then made his discovery Hey I bet—— Fartin I might have know that was you by God! You re the guy that started this Healtho-pathy rumpus——

Health thop-athy Spartan said correcting his pronunciation Anxious as he was for Milt s verdict he was afraid to receive it Then Milt began to roar with laughter

You! And from all reports you re cleaning up I ll be Look just what do you do anyway? C mon let me in on it

Spartan felt himself grinning foolishly Oh I just feed vitamins to a bunch of hypochondriacs And then I feed them a little crap along with it

Go on

"I was thinking Spartan admitted that Healthopathy doesn t seem like such a good idea right this minute

You do any harm?

You know better Milt Spartan said with dignity

All right then! So let me in on the secret. What is it?

It s ridiculous for one thing Spartan hedged But since you insist I decided that all disease is the direct result of a kinetic imbalance in the body The body is composed of kinetic components you

know, the basic materials And when they re lacking or there is a disruption—— Oh hell Milt

No! But this is great! Go on

Anyway those necessary components still present in the diseased body are called collectively the imbalansate Those lacking the therapeutic factors which are needed to cure the—— Do you honestly want to hear this bilge?

I m spellbound Milt said frankly

That evening Spartan went out to Milt s for dinner Nancy charmed him and the kids were only reasonably rambunctious How long has it been Spartan asked himself once since I relaxed and enjoyed myself like this? He found it necessary later to say matter of factly Oh just call it the Gap Everyone there did

After that both Milt and Nancy referred to the Gap without any evidence of strain Let s see you were still at the Gap then

No I wrote when I was in the Navy but the letter came back you d already gone

Milt led him to the den You drink brandy?

Yes yes lovely——

Now then Milt said I ve been meaning to ask you about this Kineticodiagnosis How do you do that?

Spartan told him adding all fancied up of course You ought to see their eyes pop out

What do you think mine are doing? Milt demanded

So that s about it Spartan concluded Healthopathy in one imbecilic lesson

Well you re making money at least

The old desire to be Buddy Boswell rolled up Not enough though But you just wait Milt I ll be spewing it out of my ears

Milt rolled his brandy warming it Funny you know? You always had a yen for the spondulics even more than for——

Spondulics! Spartan echoed

A word Milt said with raised brows I can remember quite clearly as being one of your favorites Anyway here you are finally beginning to rake it in And at the Gap you practiced medicine

See what I mean? You got both Spart but not at the same time not together

"And I guess now you want to know which one I think is the most important?

"Having known you for some years Milt said I think I can hazard a guess

They drifted off into the past until Milt said suddenly 'The only thing about this Healthopathy I mean how do you stand the quacks you have to associate with? I know you re not doing any harm but take that bastard who was treating the patient you re sending me A quack like that ought to be——

Milt, you re ingrown Spartan said and then realized how far he had gone to be able to make the statement Milt still had his foot on the rung of righteous indignation while he Spartan was peering over the top There was no describing the view no describing Phoebe Kidd or the Doctors Preebles and Knox much less Hoary Bootmaker No way of defining the personal element in the relationship between rogue and victim except to say that he was daily fawned upon leaned upon and occasionally silently adored Was Milt capable of understanding that the victims were willing? Fanatics who sincerely believed that all smokers were undetected syphilitics that taking a shower allowed the Vital forces to escape down the drain that consumption of certain foods caused one to become profane or cancerous or insane that gonorrhea could be cured by spinal adjustment and cataracts dissolved by dropping lemon juice in the eye

The Faithful—that s what we call the cranks—they re a funny bunch Milt Spartan said sounding ineffectual to his ears And with scores hundreds—God knows how many of them—running around begging to be victimized you can t blame some quack for coming along——

The hell I can t' Milt said They set themselves up in practice they don t know what they re doing they don t want to know—and yet those bastards have got to realize that sooner or later——

Like I said Spartan put in you re ingrown you re *behind* the times You take my colleagues they re not bastards My partner Bootmaker is He knows what he s up to But the rest? Milt haven t you noticed what s in the air these days? Take the over all picture There s more money flowing around than most people have seen in their whole lives up to now This country is one big carnival——

I thought we were at war Milt said quietly

Are we? Spartan asked with vast surprise Is that where the Flower of Our Youth has gone? Now hold it Milt wipe that look off your face I happen to have meant that phrase sincerely The kids who should be in med school are in the Pacific the kids who should be in engineering in chemistry in—oh anything The bright and the intelligent have all gone screaming off to war They ve left a considerable hole behind them And that s where my quack pals come in With loud cries of joy they re busily filling up that hole with them selves—they re finally coming into their own The Boys are here Milt Not just in medicine but in almost every field You know what we re coming into? Spartan wagged a finger at Milt We re just entering the golden age of the phony Every 4F bricklayer is holding down a job as a draftsman and every 4F draftsman is running around calling himself an architect In every field all the way up and down the line the phonies are taking over And by the time the kids get back the Boys ll be so solidly entrenched that it'll take fifty years for this country to come out of it The kids won t even be heard over the racket the phonies and the mediocre and the incompetent are going to be making And there s nothing in this world that can make as much noise and inspire as much esteem and reliance as a phony who s gone overboard and started believing in himself No sir Milt don t you go calling the Boys bastards A bastard is a nice fellow who happens to be a crook and doesn t make any bones about it I got a lawyer who almost fits that description except that he happens to be comparatively honest—— Oh hell what am I talking about any way?

I don t know Milt said Does it have anything to do with sex? He brightened In fact I was meaning to ask you about——

Nothing constructive Spartan said Just horsing around with the usual Hollywood scum

Shucks

because I m earnestly desirous of going to bed with my partner s pure little daughter I m afraid the dear girl does not reciprocate my lustful yearnings In her eyes I m a nonagenarian and she seems to be under the mistaken impression that I clean my nose at the dinner table or something Next question

Milt was openly admiring If there s a pitfall you re in it Health

opathy and reluctant virgins and the pleasant rustle of thousand-dol lar bills in the background

Spartan grinned I might even be serious about it you know Stick around this will be a liberal education for you

Don t worry you couldn t dissolve me off with sulphuric acid at this point!

VIII

Matters were arranged a bit differently for the Third Annual Symposium spring 1944 Dr Spartan McClintock was chairman of course and there were only two speakers Horace V Bootmaker spoke on 'The Year of Enlightenment an impassioned pane gyric on what his association with Healthopathy meant to him And a newcomer to the ranks of the Boys one G Singleton Ferrar a die titian who actually had an M S in biochemistry from some small but fully accredited Eastern college spoke on Your Diet Is Your Des tiny

Dr McClintock had stated with quiet determination before the symposium that This time we re flushing Knox K. Knox away along with his Proper Elimination He can be on the question panel along with Preebles and Professor Kidd but one peep out of any of them about anything but Kinetabs and they re out of the game for good This remark politely rephrased but without loss of force was repeated to the lady and gentlemen in question Only Phoebe re belled screaming at Spartan in a speech full of broad *a* s and broader accusations until shrugging he retorted succinctly Oh balls and stalked out of her presence

The night of the symposium the Healthopathy enthusiasts came early and fought late for seats There was a different tone to the audience—those in fur trimmed coats finding themselves shoved aside by the wearers of mink In the first row were the balding heads of several of Hollywood s most significant and there was a delight ful confusion in the third row when an exceedingly pretty young woman approached and was immediately identified as being a rising movie star Her name was due to appear in the papers the next day along with that of Dr McClintock for they both retained the services of a certain public relations expert.

That portion of the program devoted to the speeches was brief Due to the success of the question and answer period of the previous symposium an extension of this part of the program was deemed wise It was explained to the audience that a question could be asked of any member of the panel Upon completion of his answer, the other five members of the panel would then add any comments they felt relevant to the subject

It had previously been arranged that G Singleton Ferrar, a blonde stallion of a young man and the dapper distinguished Dr McClintock would come to polite loggerheads occasionally during the evening Being beholden to Spartan (for he had procured his place on the symposium by the simple expedient of calling Spartan up and asking to meet him) G Singleton Ferrar had also readily agreed to defer to Dr McClintock on most of the issues

Mr Ferrar s bland uncontroversial speech went well What he said so closely approximated scientific fact that Dr McClintock was noted to smile but once And at that only when Mr Ferrar rather overexaggerated his serviceconnected limp

The question and answer portion proved again to be a spirited innovation The very first question was addressed to Dr McClintock by an ugly redheaded toadlike man with a belligerent attitude Isn t it true Doctor McClintock that you have referred patients to medical doctors?

Dr McClintock smiled and answered readily I most certainly have And I m happy to answer that question so that I may explain the position of Healthopathy in relation to other branches of medicine Healthopathy is the science of curing disease through kinetic adjustment Note that I said disease Healthopathy is not concerned with injuries from any outside source Thus fractures cuts sprains wounds of all sorts or burns

dislocated spine I would refer him to Doctor Preebles send the fracture patient to an M D

human body is a house I the Healthopathist am an architect of the body

medical doctors mere carpenters and plumbers and if you think the A M A is any different from the A.F of L plumbers union I d like to know in what respect'

The questioner himself joined in the laughter And in the sixth row a certain chubby gentleman named Milton Salpinger grinned and slyly clapped his hands

Motherhood was introduced into a later discussion only to be be delivered out again and even later once more conceived in the mental ruminations of Dr McClintock. Aloud he was saying glibly 'You must admit that there are componential factors whose absence from the imbalansate result in diseases that are not mere deficiency diseases That has been completely factualized and thinking at the same time Why in hell couldn t we have a Maternity Clinic? Both Hoary and I are licensed to attend normal deliveries and Hoary actually has delivered a baby or two Anything tough we run into we could refer to Milt No—I can t ask Milt to share patients with us not ethical for him All right turn the rough ones over to Milt entirely Give them some hogwash about their kinetic balances being in apple pie order and now their mechanical difficulties with which Health opathy is not concerned will have to be attended to by some other competent physician trained in that field

Still mulling it over he roused himself enough to announce that alcoholism resulted from a kinetic imbalance and that further it is the scourge of the highly intelligent I have not in all my expe rience met an alcoholic whose I Q was not above the average Al coholism results from an imbalance that strikes the finest minds of our country The artist the musician the writer the actor the sculp tor That ought to hold the movie blabbermouths he thought before returning to his plans for a Maternity Clinic

At the conclusion of the symposium Spartan realized that no one had so much as spoken the epithet Morris Fishbein " and the only mention of the A M A derogatory or otherwise had been made by himself

The tone of the symposium had been infinitely classier than the earlier ones and a far cry from the hymn singing revival like orig inal he had attended a little over a year ago The next one he prom ised himself is going to be called the Healthoposium

But as it turned out he attended another symposium immediately this one being held in San Diego Several drugless healers had re quested that he come down and conduct a forum for them He flew down one evening and returned the same night. Two days later the order blanks for Kinetabs 7 and 23 began to pour in from the health

food stores and drugless practitioners of the San Diego area Following the advice of Quent Quarles he sent them bottles correctly labeled and then in separate packages sent them pamphlets containing the usual squibs about kinetic imbalance As a result of this precautionary measure he had to return to San Diego several weeks later to explain to his practitioner retailers the intricacies of avoiding the law as elucidated by Quarles to him His taxi took him past the auditorium in which the San Diego symposium had been held Glancing out of the window he saw a brief glimpse of a placard still bearing his name and the golden *H* of Healthopathy The placard now torn and rain weathered clung by one corner to a pillar and the final three letters of his name and the *H* had run together in desolate tears of ink The scene gone his mind immediately returned to business

After that he flew up to Bakersfield for a symposium and early in the summer was guest speaker at a health rally in San Francisco His subject was Alcoholism the Scourge of the Intellectual Hoary had advised him that the San Franciscans would take his lecture as a personal compliment they drank a lot and they considered themselves quite cultured what with their opera house and so forth

As a matter of fact Bootmaker said warming to the subject I have heard some excellent excellent performances there I can remember one year they gave *Don Giovanni* with——

O K O K " Spartan said Some other time Hoary I ve got to catch me a plane He swaggered out

He saw no reason to reveal to anyone that plane travel frightened him almost to the point of kinetic chaos

ix

It was at a cocktail party given by a studio executive that a prominent osteopath sneered upon meeting Spartan So you re the renowned Healthopathist, *Doctor* Spartan McClintock!

Spartan fumed for days and then went into a noisy rage when Milt Salpinger laughed himself into near hysterics over Spartan s indignation

x

In mid-summer 1944 a third trip to San Diego presented him with a problem There three of his colleagues in the drugless practice of

medicine wanted to become associated with Healthopathy He was evasive asking himself if he dared reveal to them the fragile illusion upon which Healthopathy was based

That there had been spies among those who had come for their kinetic balansations he could not deny But as long as the formulae of the Kinetabs and the meaningless interpretations he made of the kinetographs remained his secret he could not easily be exposed.

Evaluating the three petitioners he assured himself on one point they were both earnest and vain and like all genuine phonies richly endowed with that one priceless ingredient—mediocrity Perhaps if he confused and confounded them enough they might come to believe there was such a scientific school of thought as the nonexistent Healthopathy I ll have to consult my nonaffiliate associate Doctor Bootmaker he hedged I'll let you gentlemen know of our decision as soon as possible

During the flight home he mulled it over He and Hoary needed assistance that was obvious The Maternity Clinic kept them both hopping at night Spartan doing the easier deliveries for practice and their days were an anguish as they watched the slowly revolving drums of the Kineticodiagnosis Apparatus and fought against an almost hypnotically induced desire for sleep If they could invite each of the San Diegans up for a three-months stint he and Hoary would have free full time help for nine months Hell he thought we ll charge them for the privilege!

He would have to talk it over with Hoary and Quent of course and perhaps Doc Stanley might throw in an idea or two on the side

There was this too to be said in favor of taking in more associates Since he had been forced to label his Kinetabs 7 and 23 as to ingredients when sold at retail at least that much of the secret was out Of course Quent had told him he could continue to circulate literature that spoke in vague but impressive terms about the Natural Sources of the vitamins minerals proteins and enzymes in Kinetabs and the Necessity of Ascertaining that Your Kinetic Balance is Maintained only through Natural Source Vitamins but they were not as effective as he had hoped Certain drugless practitioners were saying that one vitamin formula was as good as the next and were demanding a cut in the wholesaler s price lest they turn to some other product.

It seemed more and more imperative that Healthopathy expand

that those practitioners who were no longer in awe of him be invited to become Healthopathists themselves

He went straight from the airport to the office but found that Bootmaker had left for the day

Poor Doctor Bootmaker Miss Gaily sighed He had an awful time today without you Doctor And then that ungrateful girl who was supposed to come in at four didn t get here until four thirty——

Ungrateful? Spartan said sharply What do you mean?

Miss Gaily waxed furtive Did I say that? Well I don t know what made me say such a—— He left before she finished

He drove recklessly through the dense traffic to Bootmaker s house Although already furious he still could not quite believe what he suspected Bootmaker had surely stopped his criminal activities long ago One misadventure one accidental death imperfectly concealed and Healthopathy would be wrecked

Bootmaker was out and Isolde was not sure when he would return Indulging her curiosity in his anger she lingered in the library with Spartan offering him a drink asking him about his trip

My trip was fine now go play your piano or something and leave me alone

Doc there isn t any trouble is there? I mean you seem——

No everything s fine Just fine My God any other time you act as if I m insulting you when I say good evening But tonight I can t get rid of you Go on Isolde stop being so polite and beat it!

Isolde was not at all affronted She continued to regard him brightly as though taking notes He realized suddenly that she was quite aware of her attraction for him and was taking advantage of it to pry

I guess you ve just heard about Professor Kidd s little performance she said slyly

What are you talking about? Isolde this snooping of yours is hardly becoming—wait a moment what about Professor Kidd?

She had gone too far she tried to withdraw I guess I shouldn t have mentioned it I m sorry I ll go get you that drink now

She rose abruptly and started past him but he caught her wrist and pulled her down

Let s have it Isolde You started this now finish it

She mumbled head down so that he had to strain to hear her

It was just something Professor Kidd said About you and Mr Stan hope It was after the last symposium and she came over here and created a scene Dad tried to calm her down and tell her she was imagining things of course After a while she stopped that awful screaming of hers and left That s all

"And you listened in didn t you dear? My you must pick up a lot of interesting——"

Abruptly she looked directly at him and grinned Listened? Hell Doc you could hear her down on Sunset Dad did a fine job of quiet ing her down

I can t understand Spartan said to himself why he didn t men tion it to me

He just wouldn t that s all Isolde said proudly He doesn t let his right hand know what his left hand—or whatever that quotation is She looked down at the hand restraining her and he released her reluctantly May I get you that drink?

No you may not I want you to stay here and talk to me

But the game over Isolde had grown bored In the twilight of the room her eyes were very clear and cold—indescribable in color like her hair But Doctor McClintock what about?

He dearly wanted to smack her

Isolde was still banging on her piano when Bootmaker returned an hour and a half later Spartan having nursed both rage and humil iation the whole time was spoiling to fight His scalp drew tight about his skull as Bootmaker came into the room his thick fingers raising a cigarette to his mouth He ripped into Bootmaker so un expectedly that the cigarette almost fell from the pursed lips

Well Hoary I thought you d gotten over your swinish tricks! But the minute I turn my back you go scraping out some woman Are you crazy?

"Are you speaking to me? Bootmaker said softly Or to some Jew-doctor friend of yours?

He despises me Spartan thought with satisfaction I m doing more than speaking to you by God I m laying down the law! And I ll tell you this—one more abortion and you re through Out you ll go right on your fat ass—good God you ll do anything for money won t you? You d risk all I ve built up——"

I did not charge for it Bootmaker said evenly Not one cent. He put out his cigarette and went towards his phonograph Now will

you leave this house please? Your vulgar mouth is more than I can take right now

Inwardly Spartan sagged He could no more understand his partner than he could cease loathing him secretly 'The eleemosynary abortionist he said

Bootmaker turned on a lamp and the light gleamed on his pink mouth I was sorry for the girl She had been deserted by a soldier" He bent down to his records and added parenthetically She cried when I took her home She was a Roman Catholic she said

Oh well that makes everything clear! You endanger everything I ve built up because some little slut bawls and divulges her religious affiliation to you

Go home Bootmaker begged wearily You re incapable of understanding

Because I haven t got a daughter is that it? But with you it s do unto others as you would have them do unto you Spartan said brutally Maybe someday some butcher will return the favor and scrape out Isolde for you' He s going to jump me Spartan thought seeing Bootmaker s face distort the mouth a pale flap tight against the teeth I hope he does

He watched as Bootmaker took two slow steps towards him and then fell into a chair his face dotted with sweat Are you having a heart attack? Spartan said coldly starting to go to his stricken partner

'No—— Bootmaker gasped My ulcer

Really? And who shall I call for you? Preebles? Professor Kidd? Or how about me? Maybe your kinetic——

own physician Bootmaker mumbled All right now——"

You may have a perforation Spartan said clinically Who s your doctor—I m going to call him

I m all right Bootmaker said in a more normal tone Rage I guess

I stepped out of line Spartan admitted I had no business bringing Isolde into the conversation I ll be going Oh—no more abortions Doctor Bootmaker Free or otherwise And that s final He went to the door And I advise you to call your doctor just to be on the safe side Furthermore it wouldn t hurt you to stop sucking cigarettes and slopping up Scotch or hasn t your doctor told you about that?

"Since we re giving free advice to each other " Bootmaker gasped out of his pale mouth "let me advise you to do something about Phoebe Kidd. She s found out you had some sort of special license to practice in Kennassee Issued in 1939 Or were you in Germany at the time?

"Oh no I came home early that year Spartan said glibly "What else did she say?"

"All I know so far Is there more to be found out?

"No Except that I m a loose moraled pervert of course "

"I didn t know you knew about that."

'I didn t until tonight. Isolde let it slip "

Isolde? Look McClintock my daughter is not to——"

'Your daughter means more to me than you think," Spartan cut in swiftly But I warn you you step out of line once more and I'll see to it she hears about it. Is that clear? Now go call your doctor I'll see you in the office tomorrow—unless you die on the operating table tonight."

When he stepped out into the hall the sound of Isolde s piano came to him clearly

Horace Bootmaker underwent surgery at eight that night, but it was Quent Quarles who held the trembling Isolde in his arms soothing her and calling her 'Boots while Spartan was left to conduct a disjointed conversation with the worried Mrs Quarles

When Bootmaker was back in his room again Spartan went home leaving the Quarles to take Isolde home with them

He lay awake that night eyes opened to the dark. Expanding Healthopathy the practitioners from San Diego Phoebe— he d have to do something about Phoebe butter her up Boots my God what am I going to do about her?

He seemed to be straining for some sound He could not think what it was It was almost light now and he was listening listening intently Soon the switch engine would chug up through the Gap bringing in the morning crew

With Bootmaker out for at least a month Spartan was forced to an immediate decision as to the expansion of Healthopathy On Quent Quarles s advice he called each of the three San Diegans long distance and made them his offer Singly each man was to work with him in

Los Angeles for a period of four months At the end of the training period he would be permitted to call himself an "Associate Healthopathist" For the first year of practice as an Associate Healthopathist, Healthopathy Inc, would be entitled to 10 per cent of the earnings from the Healthopathy practice The second year 5 per cent and the third 1 per cent Thereafter the Associate would be free of obligation The San Diegans were to decide among themselves which was to come up first but he needed one of them immediately

A Dr Howard Higbee who like Bootmaker was the proud possessor of the degree of D E M presented himself within the week Ardently stupid and bumbling he glittered his admiration of Spartan and Healthopathy through rimless glasses as he trotted about after him Dr Higbee had a way of breathing remarks instead of speaking them and he breathed constantly

But he also listened intently to all Spartan had to say and nodded vigorously to such words of wisdom as

"You see Doctor Healthopathy makes use of the general system of symptom diagnosis also And with both your Kineticodiagnosis and your symptom diagnosis you get a true picture of the patient's condition For example

"A patient is apparently suffering from hypochromic microcytic anemia you have the pallid skin the ridged nails a history of easy fatigability, irritability the vasomotor disturbances and a lab examination revealing the pale small red blood cells And so forth. Now—your kinetic diagnosis shows a type forty two imbalance On your componential chart you run down the forty two column until you come to hypochromic anemia. Thus and at that point in the column you will read the Kinetab number In this instance Kinetabs 104"

"Wonderful! Dr Higbee breathed

Very well Doctor Shall we roll up our sleeves? You take the patient in six. I'll drop in and help you with your readings and graphs after you re through In the meantime I can be clearing out that back log in the Maternity Clinic Oh—Miss Gaily will assist you, excellent nurse Doctor He buzzed and Miss Gaily came cantering in

Oh, Doctor how is Doctor Bootmaker this morning?

"He s doing as well as could be expected" Spartan said blandly

"Oh I m so glad!

He called Quent at his office I was thinking if Boots wants to see Hoary again tonight I d like to take her to the hospital Then maybe I could take her to dinner and a show or something Cheer the kid up

Now isn t that thoughtful of you!" Quent said voice metallic "Nothing like getting raped to take a girl s mind off her troubles

'Oh nonsense'

Well what are you asking me for? She s not my daughter and she s over twenty-one anyway Besides she went back to the house this morning The Flip boy and the housekeeper are both there so she ll be all right"

Good' I ll call her there then

Hoary" Quarles predicted glumly will have a relapse over this for sure That is—if Isolde doesn t turn you down

Isolde did not for he requested her company quite diffidently explaining that since he wanted to visit Bootmaker that evening he thought it would be nice if they could drive out together Put that way Isolde thought so too

He was benign in the presence of Bootmaker allowing only his most paternal glances to fall on the fragile Isolde The patient was recovering nicely after the ministrations of the best surgeon in town and was in a mellowed analgesic euphoria At Bootmaker s bedside was a small radio phonograph and the record albums of several operas

I wanted to tell you Spartan said heartily that Doctor Higbee is working out fine You just take it easy for as long as you need and I ll manage things somehow until you get back

Fine" Bootmaker said Isolde how s the Chromatic Fantasy and Feud coming?

Dad Isolde said gently 'you pulled that one this morning

Spartan continued to smirk paternally thankful that Bootmaker s faculties were temporarily impaired or he would have had an argument on his hands over Isolde

He sat through an interminable dinner picking at his food while Isolde ate voraciously and consumed most of the champagne Love the stuff she commented even if it is sort of vulgar

"Is there he asked sarcastically anything in this world that isn t vulgar to you?

Isolde bent on him the droll gaze she usually reserved for lucky doddering old Uncle Quent Yes but it s no fun so I never do it anyway

Oh grow up he thought glumly It was time she cast aside her sorority sister provocativeness

He changed the subject Tell me something, Boots What are you planning to do with your music—teach?

'Teach! My God no Or at least not until I ve concertized for a good many years

Oh And when do you start concertizing?

She finished off the last of his pastry and frowned. That s a question Of course I m not ready yet Not by a long shot But after I give my Master s recital—and that will be sometime next January or February—Dad is thinking of having me debut at Wilshire Ebell"

Then what?

'Then--then if the critics encourage me we'll see" She looked down at her plate slyly as though she were already at work on some secret plan

He was eager to take her home hoping to go into the empty house with her knowing full well he would not and that he would be a damn fool to try Instead parked in the dark driveway before the door he put his hands on her shoulders He had a fetish on those shoulders of hers he sometimes thought they were so thin yet powerful She sat silent turning her head to look at her front door as though expecting someone to come out and extricate her

Boots he said I m trying hard not to make a nuisance of myself but you must know——

I don t want to know she said sharply and then added on an impulse designed he supposed to irritate or intrigue him further he could not have said which but if you would like to kiss me you may

Why thank you! But aren t you afraid I ll get out of hand and run amuck?

But he took her up on it denying himself all but the mildest of liberties There was no response from her at all he might have been a cool breeze brushing across her face My word Miss Bootmaker you certainly drive men mad don t you?

She licked the corner of her mouth and laughed. Don t be bitter Good night Doc

'Boots darling he asked seriously "why don t you go straight to hell?

He called her repeatedly for the next three days she was never at home

XI

It was hard work, this business of being a successful quack. The case load grew without any signs of slackening off and Spartan sent for the next future Healthopathist to come up from San Diego before Dr Higbee s time was up Including the new man and the still convalescent Bootmaker there were four of them and they were not enough On an impulse he offered Higbee a permanent job and was accepted promptly An honor Dr Higbee breathed

He was about to send for his third San Diegan when it occurred to him that there were practitioners right in town he could probably use Quietly Horace Bootmaker went about making it known among the Boys that the eminent Dr McClintock was now conducting a postgraduate course in practical Healthopathy The response was not enthusiastic It s the professor Bootmaker said I thought you d taken care of her long ago God knows what she s been up to by now

Oh Lord Spartan fretted "I forgot all about her" He scratched the side of his head thoughtfully Although I think Stanhope would probably have put me wise to anything new of hers He s right in the middle of that crowd she s always fawning on. The smart Hollywood Blabbermouthry set.

"Well you d better do a little blabbermouthing on your own with Phoebe Bootmaker shot him a sly glance Shouldn t be too hard, an irresistible lover like you

Spartan slammed down the chart he was holding and glared at Bootmaker But his partner was innocently widening a paper clip with his thumb to make it slip over a thick bundle of graphs

"How s Isolde? Spartan asked attacking suddenly

"Why just fine Bootmaker answered airily Just fine

He called Phoebe at a quarter to five and asked to see her as soon as possible Perhaps that evening if she were free Might he see her for no more than an hour—it was very important. It took another ten

minutes before she admitted that strangely enough just on that one particular night she could spare him a few moments of her time

And it took until five fifteen before she reluctantly granted him the pleasure of her company at dinner

Phoebe looking *soignée* and exquisite seemed bent on making her capture as difficult as possible for Spartan In a black suit with a hat made completely of flowers encircling her gun metal hair she excited every man in the restaurant but him He had to listen to her

Over her salad she was capricious over the entrée indifferent she buttered a roll angrily astonished a waiter by addressing him in a hurt tone was dignified over her dessert of cheese and wafers and during the entire meal she was stultifyingly dull He kept after her hacking his way through a jungle of inconsistencies At last he got her to the point of admitting I should think you d have awsked that silly G Singleton Ferrar instead of me

"Oh I m going to take him into the organization too" Spartan said smoothly I had thought he would make you an excellent assistant Someone to handle the routine details right here in town while the exacting responsibilities of dealing directly with the public would be your position Look Professor let me state this to you as a fact. I m not trying to make love to you—at least not yet this evening You re a beautiful intelligent cultured and forceful woman You re wasting yourself on the few clients you have And even the milk companies resent you instead of having the sense to appreciate you and your koumiss Well let me tell you Healthopathy Laboratories has come to its senses We ve let an unparalleled asset like yourself run around loose long enough It just came to me that if Healthopathy Labs didn t tie you down in an iron-clad contract in a hurry some other company would Why Phoebe can't you see the scope of this thing we need you to do for us?

Phoebe looked slightly dazed as though she agreed implicitly with everything he had to say but still had no idea what he was talking about

He plunged on California is our most important territory and we need someone capable of doing the tremendous job of representing Kinetabs all up and down the state We need someone with the educational background the experience to lecture——

But he had gone too far too fast for Phoebe interrupted thoughtfully I m not sure I want to be out of town all the time All my

friends are here and they need me too No Doctor McClintock, I m afraid I can t accept your offer——"

I haven t made it yet Spartan said slyly 'Naturally I thought we d discuss the financial end of it—somewhere where it s more private Having invited himself to her apartment he awaited her next move expectantly

She shrilled softly which he supposed was her particular Brit icism for an alluring laugh and prepared to rise He was on his feet instantly adjusting his expression to one of vain hope, his attitude to that of the knight palely loitering

At her door he said wistfully Phoebe I've lots to say to you yet."

Business? she asked waspishly

"I'm afraid to admit to anything else He was still being humble and she went in neither acknowledging the fact that he was right behind her nor saying anything

Phoebe s apartment surprised him It was cool—all white walls odd ebony pieces that looked Chinese but were not and floating icebergs of blue satin furniture here and there for contrast Drawing off her gloves and removing her hat Phoebe looked the perfect woman to live the refrigerated life in the delicate room She had chosen her surroundings with the loving care of the artist enamored of his work

He felt awkward and brutish suddenly his male rump too gross a burden to place on the satin sofa his feet too huge and clumsy to tread the oyster carpet "Nice place you got here he heard himself say horrified

A very dear friend of mine a most talented man helped me decorate it to compliment my personality Only black white and blue you see Phoebe said lightly I m so glad you like it."

"I like it very much he said boldly but I disagree She raised a brow and looked interested but he refused at that moment to ex plain further He sat beside her very carefully allowing her time to master her egocentric curiosity Later of course he knew she would bring up her question most casually

"Although I rarely drink Phoebe said experimentally I think I might have some crème de menthe

"But that s *green!*" he protested

Phoebe looked at him fully "I have white" Then leaving him in defeat on the blue satin couch she went out of the room.

minutes before she admitted that strangely enough just on that one particular night she could spare him a few moments of her time

And it took until five fifteen before she reluctantly granted him the pleasure of her company at dinner

Phoebe looking *soignée* and exquisite seemed bent on making her capture as difficult as possible for Spartan In a black suit with a hat made completely of flowers encircling her gun metal hair she excited every man in the restaurant but him He had to listen to her

Over her salad she was capricious over the entrée indifferent she buttered a roll angrily astonished a waiter by addressing him in a hurt tone was dignified over her dessert of cheese and wafers and during the entire meal she was stultifyingly dull He kept after her hacking his way through a jungle of inconsistencies At last he got her to the point of admitting I should think you d have awsked that silly G Singleton Ferrar instead of me

Oh I m going to take him into the organization too Spartan said smoothly I had thought he would make you an excellent assistant Someone to handle the routine details right here in town while the exacting responsibilities of dealing directly with the public would be your position Look Professor let me state this to you as a fact I m not trying to make love to you—at least not yet, this evening You re a beautiful intelligent cultured and forceful woman You re wasting yourself on the few clients you have And even the milk companies resent you instead of having the sense to appreciate you and your koumiss Well let me tell you Healthopathy Laboratories *has come to its senses* We ve *let an unparalleled asset* like yourself run around loose long enough It just came to me that if Healthopathy Labs didn t tie you down in an iron-clad contract in a hurry some other company would Why Phoebe can't you see the scope of this thing we need you to do for us?

Phoebe looked slightly dazed as though she agreed implicitly with everything he had to say but still had no idea what he was talking about

He plunged on "California is our most important territory and we need someone capable of doing the tremendous job of representing Kinetabs all up and down the state We need someone with the educational background the experience to lecture——

But he had gone too far too fast for Phoebe interrupted thoughtfully I m not sure I want to be out of town all the time All my

Over her babblings of love and the necessity for it preceding overt sex acts and other unrelated topics she had at that moment chosen to discuss he shouted Will you shut up long enough to let me kiss you! There was a blessed silence for a long moment Now then Phoebe he said menacingly here s what you ve been asking for all evening

Phoebe yipped and frantically edged further away from him Yet inadvertently in her panic to escape him she was merely pressing herself down deeper into the couch trapping herself more hopelessly under him He pressed his advantage while she endeavored to claw him and suddenly there was the embarrassing sound of material ripping

Cool air condensed moisture on his back while he stared at her Now he was unsure whether to proceed or retreat and her glittering eyes offered him no help in arriving at a solution He rose slightly and his shirt gaped forward

Then disgusted with both of them he determined to go through with it Quite deliberately he put one hand to her chest to hold her down like a dog securing a chunk of meat with one paw while he removed his shirt with the other She lay silent breathing rapidly saying nothing

But when he turned away from her to put the ripped shirt on the ebony table she gasped Spartan what are all those white scars on your back? As if as if——

Lowering himself over her again he said solemnly Before I escaped from Germany I was questioned about my work Over there they ask questions with a—lash

They tortured you? she whispered strangely Suddenly she hurled herself up to him whimpering oddly and then her moist tongue passionately began to probe his left ear while her fingers lovingly explored his scars

My God! he thought maybe I ought to yell for help But immediately after that he rejected the idea

In the morning he came into the office whistling Bootmaker looked at him curiously "Well what about Phoebe?

"Signed sealed and delivered Spartan said jauntily "for only eight thousand a year

Expenses too?

She made them stingers cruel drinks on which to get drunk. He chalked it up to business knowing his headache would be merciless in the morning "Phoebe he asked once do you happen to have any Kinetabs Thirty four around by any chance?

If you mean B_1 she said pithily I do You re not the only one who is aware of the properties of vitamins dear Doctor Spartan McClintock.

He realized that he was not wooing her back into the fold a moment too soon

Phoebe was proving no easy conquest. Stinger after stinger she grew more shrill more coy and more adamant He offered her eight thousand a year and expenses and she hummed a snatch of Tchaikovsky He twisted about on the satin couch and declared himself her slave and she countered coolly Why did you say you disagreed with my decorator? Don t you think this color scheme suits me?"

"You go climb into something more comfortable" he said, reverting suddenly to the oaf and I ll tell you

To his surprise she obeyed swaying a bit as she left him. When she returned either her lovely face above the satin robe or the liquor he had consumed, reiterated to him what a pleasant task really awaited him

"Now tell me she said, softly for her contrasting her fragility with his brutality

Thus instructed by her manner he took the collar of the robe and gently opened it to lie straight across her shoulders one hand holding the material together at the vale between her breasts Look in the mirror he commanded Over the mantel their eyes met Phoebe s bright his narrowed with a lustful calculation

"You think you re cold don t you? he challenged her "Well look at yourself—only a courtesan has a right to look that exciting. This room is just a front you re a passionate woman, goddamn you and you know it! He lunged for her and she drew away by leaning back almost full length

Suddenly he was sincerely aroused He was sick of women who were cold or thought they were cold or prided themselves on being cold He was bored with their notional sex attitudes first Isolde and now Phoebe If Phoebe needed to tell herself she was being raped before she would surrender then he was in the perfect mood to accommodate her conscience

Boys who felt daring enough to be seen drinking by prospective patients

Many friendships were begun that afternoon Ives Stanhope and Dr Stanley agreed that Michelob was the finest beer they had ever tasted. Knox K Knox informed a drunken radio writer that he drank because of autointoxication and the writer said that if he was drunk anyway he might as well indulge himself and Wilson Preebles disagreed and said he drank because of vaccination sickness and the writer said that that was quite true for he had been vaccinated in 1912 and took off his coat and rolled up his sleeve to prove it Phoebe came in shrilled with delight at the discovery that one of the bright young quacks had written a play while in high school, and departed with him still in the same high spirits

Then when the Faithful had left for other parties and Bootmaker had had to leave early for he and Isolde were off to some musical function or other the staff gathered around Spartan. With that rather timid and appealing gesture of friendship which the employee makes to the employer at Christmastime they presented him with an oblong box Inside he found a wrist watch with the golden *H* of Healthopathy engraved on the back

He thanked them he grinned he proposed that they all have another drink and he took off the watch Andrew Fuqua had once worn and strapped on the other instead. He went to the window to draw the curtains against the damp dusk and stood looking out at lights blinking on here and there all over the city More than enough time had passed for him to discard and put certain portions of his life forever away

Now that it was five in the afternoon even the staff were suddenly impatient to be gone They had husbands and wives and children to go home to there were trees to be decorated and promises to be fulfilled They were waiting politely for Spartan himself to suggest that they all leave

He thought with brief distaste of the sour antiseptic woman of sixty who kept his house for him and cooked his tasteless meals But he slammed down his glass with a tinkle of finality and said loudly to all "Well I m off people in an alcoholic haze Merry Christmas!"

Immediately they scampered for coats and umbrellas And when Spartan went down the hall to check the door that led to the rear

elevator there was only Miss Gaily and Doctor Higbee left. Spartan gathered up the ribbon-decorated bottles for the elevator boys and the office building help and stuck his head into the darkened reception room As I said before I m off I ll go out my office door, Miss Gaily so lock this one when you——

I m not Miss Gaily the figure coming towards him said. 'I'm looking for Doctor Bootmaker—has he gone?

She came up to him as he stood in the hallway she was tall young and exceedingly pretty Much prettier than Isolde, though not so finely articulated for all her photographic perfection He liked her brown eyes at once they met the world directly, gazing out slightly widened as though there was nothing they did not dare face even if they were to be continually astonished. I dashed over as soon as I could get away from the office she said "I just kept hoping Doctor Bootmaker would be here

I m sorry I m Doctor McClintock is there anything I can do?"

She smiled great square teeth gleaming under the light Oh I m not sick She shoved a box forward I just brought him a Christmas present

Still he could not place her Are you one of our patients? Hoary he thought was holding out on him

Oh no I—— The direct gaze dropped away abruptly 'Doctor Bootmaker was—awfully kind to me not so long ago—and well I knitted this sweater for him Now she looked up at Spartan again and grinned I worked my cotton pickin fingers off trying to get it done in time because I m a slow knitter——

Miss Gaily s voice intruded so loudly that Spartan winced. Why it s Miss—Doctor why don t you just go on home it won t take me a minute——

Oh but Miss—Miss uh——"

"Miss Jolyon " the girl said

Miss Jolyon came here with a present for Doctor Bootmaker Miss Gaily

I'll put it on his desk myself Miss Gaily said in the strange loud voice as though all this were very important Doctor why don t you run on before all that drunken traffic out there gets——

I could kick myself the girl said Now he won t get it until after Christmas

"Doctor McClintock Miss Gaily insisted again taking the box from the girl "I can lock up and check everything before I leave myself You just——

Is there something wrong Miss Gaily? he asked so quietly that Miss Gaily subsided suddenly and smiled wildly

Why no! No Doctor——

He had guessed almost simultaneously as he asked the question who this girl was Hoary had done her a favor indeed for had Spartan not been in San Diego at the time she would now be in the final weeks of her pregnancy "I can take care of Miss Jolyon he said to Miss Gaily Let me have the present please

"But——"

"You go along he said becoming curt. I'm perfectly capable of closing up my own offices Miss Gaily Let s see now Miss Jolyon we'll put the sweater right on Doctor Bootmaker s desk He led her down the hall towards his own office and shot one backward glance at Miss Gaily who retreated hastily By the way Miss Jolyon you look and act perfectly sober Or don t you know this is Christmas Eve?

"I do the girl said but my boss is named Ebenezer I think—I thought Doctor Bootmaker s office was at the other end of the hall

It is What ll you have—Scotch bourbon, brandy eggnog——"

"Your office is perfectly beautiful! Make it brandy please I hope that cotton pickin sweater fits

"Here you are Spartan said handing her a glass He raised his own. Wassail!

"Up your bucket, Miss Jolyon cried cheerfully and touched her glass to his She drank, brown eyes meeting his stare innocently What s the matter Doctor McIntyre?

'McClintock You—have a refreshing vocabulary Miss Jolyon"

"I read a lot, she said complacently I read every cotton pickin best-seller that comes out Incidentally call me Joni—spelled with an *i* and doesn t happen to be my real name

How do you do Joni and what do you do?

Oh any old job so long as it s honest I d like to get in the movies —I've got the looks She held out her glass "Would you kindly contribute further to my delinquency Doctor?

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Pouring he said on impulse "Look, I know you don t have a fam

ily, so unless you have other commitments could you have dinner with me tonight?

How did you know I didn t have a family?"

I remember Bootmaker s mentioning it

' Oh She looked down into her glass and he saw that her mouth was vulnerable I was hoping you didn t know what that thing was that Doctor Bootmaker did for me

I did " he said but I ve forgotten How about it Joni? Dinner? Or have you other plans?

I had other plans Doctor

He could not have said why he was so disappointed

which were unavoidably changed at the last moment Joni Jolyon concluded with a grin You re not married are you, Doctor?

"My first name is Spartan and I ve never been married

She shrugged Me either Spartan Where do we two virgins go for our suppers?

Wherever you like

"That s easy! Ciro s!

He found that he was charmed with this girl and it was more than her robust handsomeness that attracted him To be with her to enjoy her frankness and often her brashness was as simply as he could put it to bask And it did not occur to him to ask her to sleep with him—at least not that first night

On their peregrinations they stopped in at the Salpingers for a drink and to leave off the presents And before they left Nancy took Spartan aside and murmured I like your girl friend Spart—we both like her very much You ll bring her around again won t you?

It seemed quite natural for him to say confidently Oh you ll probably be seeing a lot of Joni Nan Good looking kid isn t she?

She s a screaming beauty Nancy said with a sigh And she knows it But I can forgive a little vanity when its combined with an enthusiasm like that She s good for you Spart—you re perkier than I ve seen you in a coon s age

He kissed her on the cheek I m having a good time tonight I m having one hell of a good time!

Nancy s laughter was a matronly patting on the top of his head Grow middle aged for me one of these days will you? I m just dying to see how you re going to act

To greet the New Year 1945 he took Joni with him to a function of which the main purpose was apparently to breach what peace there was and which had been so recently won for the world And as a goodly number of the guests were or had been at one time or would probably one day be his patients he was at his most affable and bibulous best

His host for the evening was a producer a patient of Spartan s so chockful of vitamins amino acids enzymes male hormones and damn fool ideas that he had made an award winning movie in only fifty days about a submarine commander who was in love with a woman or a Navy nurse who got raped by the Japanese Spartan could never remember which Across the glass-enclosed patio as he entered Spartan caught sight of his publicity agent and just beyond him the prominent supercilious Hollywood osteopath who made only slightly less than Spartan did and next to him an actor—or so repute had it All three were directing most satisfactory oglings at Joni in her Adrian dress

Did you mention once he said to Joni smugly that you wanted to get into the movies?

She pulled her eyes away from the assemblage to his Spart I can t believe what I m looking at! Why didn t you tell me you ran around with people like this? Get into the movies—what the hell *isn t* this one?

Ives was upon them staring at Joni Ah?'

Spartan introduced him and Ives came in punctually with the stock statement Why aren t you in pictures? he asked Joni severely

'They bore the can off me Joni said artlessly

Ives looked bewildered and then as a band blasted into existence found himself automatically extending his arm to Joni I d love to Joni said

Spartan went in search of a drink When he returned Joni was dancing with someone else and Ives was waiting for him She s charming Doctor Utterly primitive!" He took one of the drinks from Spartan s hand and absently began to sip at it Oh—may I?"

May you drink? Yes for tonight only But may you grab the very drink I just now risked my life to get——"

Isolde was standing at the top of the three marble steps and beside her holding her arm and looking virile in a blond boyish fashion

was G Singleton Ferrar Her dress was a calm assured statement that every other woman in the room had execrable taste and was exposing herself besides Goddamn her Spartan thought in a sudden unreasonable anger does she have to look at people that way? Then even as he saw Joni coming back to him and caught the startled ex pression on her face as he ignored her he was pushing through to Isolde Hello Boots! Slumming again?

Isolde looked bored Happy New Year Doc Where s Dad?

I didn t even know he was——

Looking for Doctor Bootmaker? Joni said suddenly at Spartan s side She looked past Isolde to admire young Ferrar openly

How helpful Isolde murmured to no one Tony Dad obvi ously isn t in here listening to these dirges she gestured at the band. Good by Doc Miss——

Jolyon, Joni said

He was overdue Spartan realized in getting a grip on himself Oh—Miss Bootmaker Miss Jolyon And my assistant Singleton Ferrar Where are you two off to Tony? Silently he added and I just may fire you out on your can in the morning

Ferrar launched into a cordial invitation Well my frat—I was in the Beta Rho chapter back East—but I met some of the fellows when I came to town—are throwing a brawl—— Doctor you and Miss Jolyon ought to come with us—right, Boots?

Doctor McClintock would find it dull I m afraid" Isolde said lightly But you re perfectly welcome to join us Did you go to U C L A or S C Miss Jolyon?

Spartan would have endeavored to prevent whatever was coming but for the fact that he caught sight of Bootmaker frozen staring at them He waved delightedly at his horrified partner

Frank Wiggins Trade School Joni was saying airily I'm a graduate sandhog—oh Happy New Year Doctor Bootmaker! Did the sweater fit?

Yes Happy New Year my dear Would you care to dance with an old timer like me Joni? He dropped his portliness in a frenzied rush to the dance floor dragging the astonished Joni behind him

What sweater?" Isolde said

"Tony Spartan ordered go round up all the spare drinks you can lay your hands on Come on Isolde

He led her adroitly through the crowd away from Bootmaker

who with full co-operation was capering rapidly off in the other di rection

Boots Spartan said 'why did you find it necessary to insult a patient of ours?

"Please don t try to reprimand me Isolde said coldly You'll embarrass both of us And moreover I didn t know she was a pa tient—I didn t know who she was and I didn t care I presume now though that she s with you?

You presumed that quite a while ago Boots Otherwise you d not have bothered Am I right?

She sidestepped him What about that sweater?

Joni knitted a sweater for your father for Christmas She likes Hoary—she thinks he s a kind man She thinks it was very nice of him to—to take care of her when she was broke a while back So she knitted him a sweater for Christmas Is that all too impossibly vul gar for you?

If her name is really Joni it is Isolde said skeptically "Excuse me she added hastily I forgot you brought her here"

I m sure you—— He realized suddenly that they had been shouting at each other over the blatting of the band

He pulled her down a hallway where people were leaning against the walls conferring with one another and spilling drinks down each other s fronts There was a room containing an enormous library and past it another with an almost abandoned table loaded with food One disconsolate little rubicund man was slowly eating his way around the table sampling each variety of sandwich canapé hors d oeuvres candy *glacé* and cheese that he found there He looked up and smiled broadly as Spartan and Isolde came in and Spartan rec ognized him as a Healthopathy patient

"Why ith Doctor McClintock! the man said with a wistful cheer

Spartan remembered him now Sergei Packard an astute busi nessman the owner of a string of jewelry stores But because of Packard s unfortunate and almost overpoweringly hilarious lisp and his dumpy unprepossessing appearance he wandered through life buying women and the time of men like Spartan who were highly paid to give him respectful attention And he was always pathetically grateful

Spartan introduced him to Isolde and was slightly surprised to see her charming smile and to hear the gracious little inanities spilling

from her mouth Is she genuinely sorry for the guy, he wondered, or is she just showing off again? Mutely he joined the procession around the table planning how he could segregate her Isolde s reaction to the bawdy Joni pleased him and he suspected that he might be suffering from the vain hope that she was jealous or at least provoked that his ardor might now be directed elsewhere

He made a bottleneck of himself so that soon they were separated from his patient who was almost hidden on the other side of the table behind a great candelabrum massed with flowers 'Let s sit down he urged pointing to the stiff brocaded chairs ranged about the walls

'I m hungry Isolde protested characteristically I like it here ' She bit into a small stick of cheese garnished celery Doctor I would appreciate it if you would find Tony for me We ve got to be leaving——

Tony won t be back for hours he said in a lowered voice 'He has sense enough to know when he s told to get lost

In that case I ll go find him she said dropping her voice also Incidentally I don t care for the way you ordered him away from us like that During the day he may work for you but tonight he happens to be my date

You re slipping he said witheringly 'when you have to run around with a fathead like Tony They were arguing heatedly softly and eating bonbons and salted nuts rapidly in their agitation.

You re doing so well yourself Doctor McClintock.

Yes aren t I? She s a beautiful girl isn t she?

Is she? Isolde said indifferently I didn t notice " She assaulted an open faced sandwich

No you were too busy trying to insult——

I was not trying to insult her! One minute I was asking you where Dad was and the next that loud mouthed vulgarian in her Adrian dress that I m sure she bought with her own wages as a steam fitter or whatever she is came up—— She took three steps and pounced on a wedge of cheese She was enjoying this

Suddenly he no longer fancied himself in the role of importuning swain You have a wonderful time making a fool of me don t you Boots? he said and left her

As he went through the door he could hear her cry charmingly

"Have you tried these little green sandwiches Mr Packard? They re delicious!

Esth, aren t they? And theth little squarthes of "

In the hall a servant started to pass Spartan with a tray of cham pagne Spartan stopped him and began to work his way around the tray while the servant looked on impassively

There was a swish of taffeta and lace and a breeze of perfume and Isolde s straight thin back was departing from him Her hair was piled in formal waves on her head but one curl had drifted down her neck. It bounced several times as she went down the three mar ble steps and disappeared into the crowd

"Might as well Spartan said philosophically send you back to the bar No use carrying one full glass around He took the last of the champagne and wandered with it into the room with the books

A hand from nowhere clapped him on the shoulder almost pitch ing him to the floor Mac! Want you to meet a couple of guys work on newspaper Boy are you loaded! It was his press agent, but since Spartan was no drunker than the men towards whom he was being led he submitted with a good grace

When Joni found him he was saying earnestly I tell you it s the above average men like yourselves the ones who are in the highly competitive arts or fields closely related to the arts who fall prey to alcohol! What the hell the working man can lay down his rivet gun and go home with nothing on his mind But people like you——

Spart old thing" Joni interrupted you re stinkin

Before they left the room Joni was most careful to see to it that the gentlemen knew what her name was and how to spell it

Sometime during the evening everyone had begun kissing every one else Spartan grabbed Joni and did likewise Happy birthday Boots he said and kissed her again

Slowly he grew lucid over a cup of coffee It was quiet in his liv ing room and outside the glass wall there were stars floating on his swimming pool Joni was looking at him

"Don t tell me I drove us home he said

Are you serious? I did

Somehow this seemed to present a problem He approached his

thought processes cautiously and sidewise Reminds me of the mis sionary and the cannibals You know?

No

I take it this is still New Year s Day He pressed fingertips to his forehead Not bad not bad at all A little sleep and I ll feel fine for the game

Look Joni said let me take the car home and I'll return it——

"Certainly not! I ll not have you driving around that crummy neighborhood where you live at this hour of the morning Whatever hour that is He looked at her more closely as she lay curled on the couch that was twin to his Her large eyes were tired but still soft still so soft He put down the coffee cup and went over to her Joni—did I make an awful ass of myself this evening?

You had company

I meant did you have a good time? Joni listen I ve known you for a week and you re wonderful Everywhere I ve taken you my friends are crazy about you Nancy Salpinger thinks you re exactly what the doctor ordered for me

Nancy Salpinger isn t the doctor in that family Spart

All right Milt—— He took her in his arms and pushed himself down beside her What are we arguing about? Joni

Above his spent breathing he heard her saying bitterly All right you ve had it Get off me you big slob! Just because you can t get into Isolde Bootmaker s pants doesn t give you the right to treat me this way

He raised himself and saw that she was crying Joni! Joni honey, what did——

I want to go home! she wailed Goddamn you take me home I don t ever want to see you again!

He was contrite he was humble he begged for forgiveness for all sorts of things he had and hadn t done She was adamant and tearful At last, as he took her to the door of the depressing rooming house where she lived he grew angry

The hell with her he proclaimed to himself But when he awak-

ened at noon he called her even before getting out of bed Hi Joni do you love me yet?

Good by"

Joni! Wait——

What!

You left something here last night.

I know she said coldly I left two of them You may keep them to remem—— Oh Spartan why are you such a slob!

I don t know Let s have breakfast and figure it out

*He didn t want to lose Joni. He knew that much about their rela*tionship but very little else

XIII

At first it seemed only that things were at last running smoothly at the clinic The days turned about him as evenly and leisurely as the drums for the Kineticodiagnosis apparatus His other interest the subsidiary Healthopathy Labs was running itself almost excepting the assistance of Charlie Tony Ferrar and the muchly traveled increasingly popular Kinetabs representative Professor Phoebe Kidd

And everyone was taking Kinetabs—his full page ads in the newspapers for Kinetabs 7 had caused business to spurt

The clinic itself was booming with a well bred roar

And then he suspected suddenly that it was not really a greater efficiency in the clinic that was responsible for the smoothness of its working but rather a mild almost unnoticeable slump that had permitted them to take up the slack He muttered about it to Hoary but Bootmaker hummed an aria and hung up a kymograph to dry Just seasonal Spart People forget about their imaginary complaints when it s spring

Spartan was not satisfied I don t like it—maybe we ve overextended ourselves Or maybe we haven t extended ourselves enough I don t mean the Lab end of it that s doing fine But we ought to think up some gimmick or other to bring Healthopathy back to the fore

Have a sale Bootmaker said unperturbed Two for five or something

Oh shut up No look you don t run around as much as I do you don t sniff the wind enough And everywhere I ve gone re

cently I've heard the same old—or rather new—crap" He made his voice falsetto My analyst this my analyst that—I don t like it. I tell you it s as easy to be a mental hypochondriac as a physical one, if you understand what I mean

Or both Bootmaker insisted cheerily

No not both! A Blabbermouth can keep but one thing on his mind at one time and it s an effort for him at that

Why do you keep calling them Blabbermouths?

Because that s what they are! Talk, talk blab blab a bunch of nincompoops with the I Q s of rutabaga and egos worse than Wag ner s

"Really! Bootmaker said delighted Where did you——

Let s not start on opera I just said that to make a point Our business is built on the patronage of morons and like morons their minds wander unless you keep them amused every minute And right now a lot of them are beginning to find spilling their guts on a couch somewhere too amusing for words

Maybe you should go spill yours Bootmaker said equably You re getting more neurotic every day In fact Higbee was breath ing to me about somebody he knows who——"

I don t want to hear it! Look Hoary I ve just gone over our records for the last three months There—is—a—definite—slump!"

I ve got a patient waiting Bootmaker said

He was greeted with the same amused reaction from everyone Quent Quarles said My God you re making enough to buy a battle ship Relax!

And Dr Stanley said Well I can t seem to think of any new developments that are exciting at all But as it is we ve had to hire extra men just to get out that last order of yours

And Tony Ferrar said You know Doctor I was telling Isolde the other night that if you hadn t become a Healthopathist, you d have been a captain of industry Oh and I called the agency about that baseball player and they said he won t do the testimonial for less than five thousand That isn t too much is it?

And Milt said Yeah I feel for you terribly Ted'll be ready for college next year and then you ll really hear someone yelling about money

And Phoebe Kidd said Dear Doctor McClintock darling! I ve bean getting the most enthusiastic reception ev——

And Joni said Sweetie pie hand me my nail file will you? It s right over there on top of *Forever Amber* And do stop *mulling* will you? Sometimes I think you re not happy unless you re——

In the end it was Ives Stanhope who unintentionally handed him the key to a bright new golden door

Ives was low Ives had voluntarily betaken himself back to bed After he finished promising Ives on the phone to stop in that evening Spartan studied the most recent X rays Frowning Spartan decided Probably just a virus But I can t take any chances

Ives had the sniffles and a half-degree of temperature Spartan put his stethoscope away and drew up a comfortable chair You d better stay flat for several days At this stage of the game you could slip back too easi——

To his horror he saw a tear slip across Ives s cheek Spartan looked away nervously swinging the key to Joni s apartment on its chain Any little thing now will weaken you I can see that you re mentally depressed but a virus infection often makes one——

"I m more than just depressed Ives blurted out I m—Doctor—I m almost in despair He tossed about fretfully I don t suppose you know what it s like to feel utterly worthless utterly contemptible utterly——

Well! Spartan said bedsidedly I can see right now that the first thing I'm going to prescribe for you is a nice hot toddy Where s that man of yours I ll have him——

He left me Ives wept He knocked me down and quit. And I can t blame him Even a servant has pride if the people who work *with* me can t bear me why should the ones who work *for* me?

"Now this is ridiculous Spartan said sharply You re letting yourself get all out of hand just because a servant quit you at a time when you were coming down with a virus

Ives half rose from his pillow and looked at Spartan bleanly It s more than that Doctor Surely you must know I m a deviate His mouth was painful to watch he was like a young girl humiliating herself before men

Spartan resorted to a matter-of factness 'That s not a statement of what s bothering you that s an evasion What s really the matter Ives? Is it that when you re out deviating these days you don t enjoy it any more?"

I haven t the slightest desire to be normal Ives said flopping back miserably In fact I m going more and more the other way

You re not luring boys under fourteen or anything like that, are you?

Oh of course not! Ives rallied

Spartan smiled I was wondering whether you had any spirit left at all ' Abruptly he became censorious Frankly, I m disappointed in you Stanhope You greet me with a long face and announce out of the blue that you re a deviate A deviate from what, for God s sake? A deviate from the standard of sexual behavior laid down by the nincompoop on the street? Is that what s suddenly bothering you? Or is it that some studio snip who s jealous of your position in this town has taken a crack at you?

Ives twitched and begged Spartan with his eyes

I see He succeeded in making you feel guilty then Well you listen to me Ives! Do you feel guilty because you don t read the comic books the nincompoop on the street does because you don t listen to his comedians on the radio, because you don t think that the hogwash the disc jockies dish out is the greatest music since Mozart wrote *The Magic Flute*?

Ives grinned briefly You and Doctor Bootmaker

At least you re getting my point Spartan said rather pleased himself with his musical reference You deviate from every other cultural standard the nitwit crowd has laid down why balk at di gressing equally as far in your sexual pleasures? You re not hurting anyone are you? You re not out raping children! Snap out of it life s too short to spend it worrying about what the mediocrity on the stu dio lot thinks of you In fact—any time he starts admiring your way of life—beware! You re slipping!

Believe me Ives if there is one precept above all others for which Healthopathy stands it is this Each human being is a kinetic unit Naturally his kinetic components are those of every other indi vidual but his kinetic equation is his alone He can be typed loosely as to class but that s all But for each individual there is one indi vidual constant that balances his equation and no other And any time that constant whether it be mental or physical is changed the unit begins to vibrate against itself and is ultimately destroyed

Spartan put his fingertips together and peeped over them at the avidly attentive Ives

"Put it this way Cramming the individual into the tight mold of the norm is destruction. You have destroyed an original to obtain a worthless copy And this—as far as I can determine—is the goal and life work of every analytical-couch specialist Stay away from the Group Ives from the Crowd from the Herd——

Don t be a sheep Ives whispered in inspiration "be the shepherd!"

Well Spartan thought, that s that. He looked at the watch given him by his employees and wondered if he d have time for a swim before dinner I ve got to run Ives But I'll send my housekeeper over to look after you until you can hire someone else And remember any more of this destructive nonsense and I'll put you flat on your back for a month I don t intend to permit you to plague your self into a psychosomatic relapse Your componential balance is nearly perfect these days keep it that way"

Stanhope smiled beatified You have such a firm grip on reality Doc You know you ve got a firm grip on the mind of everyone who comes in contact with you.

'The Healthopathist deals with the complete unit" Spartan said, rising Mental Healthopathy is as important as its physical counterpart.

Ives mused "I could name at least one hundred people right now who desperately need the intellectual and spiritual stimulation you gave me this afternoon

It s a thought Spartan said, ever the businessman Send them around

"I shall Ives promised seriously "Oh Doc about your housekeeper won t I be inconveniencing you?"

'Not at all Spartan said smoothly Joni can sew on any buttons I lose in the meantime

'Yes" Ives said considering 'Lovely girl Joni Too bad she can t act."

Oh, it gives her something to think about during the day" Spartan said. I really wouldn t like to see her get a contract, you know"

"I know" Ives said meaningfully "She won t.

And it wasn t until Spartan was idly fondling Joni that night that he remembered what he had said Mental Healthopathy

He sat up and pummeled the coffee table Mental Healthopathy!"

'Mental case you mean! Joni grumbled And don t change the subject Why do I have to live in that apartment—why can t I just live in this nice big house with you?

Mental Spartan shouted, Healthopathy!

You re crazy,' Joni diagnosed No wonder you want to live alone, all mad scientists do

XIV

The cards went out many more of them than might at first be justified by the number of patients Spartan intended to accept As always the cover of the card bore the golden *H* of Healthopathy and nothing more Inside in script, was the following

Spartan McClintock, H D

A limited select number of patients are now being accepted for group sessions in Mental Healthopathic Therapy Admission to a group only after personal interview and acceptance by Dr McClintock

Healthopathy Clinic
Beverly Hills California

Bootmaker was patently amused He dropped one of the cards on Spartan s desk, neglecting to replace it on the pile from which he had taken it I can t see why you re bothering

Money Spartan said succinctly Or have you forgotten the things you used to do for it?

At least Bootmaker said unruffled I didn t invite them out to my house

I still think it s a good idea Until it gets too cool we can have the sessions around my pool I ll hire a man to buttle and tend bar and put the whole thing on a sort of social level

'Why? Bootmaker asked simply

'Why? Why what? Why expand Healthopathy you mean? My God why do anything? Why not just dig a hole and crawl in and pull it in after you—that seems to be your philosophy these days

Bootmaker smoothed his neat mustache and gazed at the *Universitatis Plotkinensis* diploma framed above Spartan s head "I never saw anybody work so hard at his job to get away from his

job he observed as you do Well have fun Spart This is your baby—I ll stick to listening to music and seeing my friends in my spare time

Not to mention spoiling that precious daughter of yours Spartan thought resentfully

Bootmaker s amusement irked him but Milt s blunt disapproval caught him off guard completely

I don t quite see what you re intending to do for these groups Milt said

Do? They ll do it I m giving them a chance to sit around for an hour every day and talk about themselves What s the harm in that? Or does the psychoanalyst serve some other function some holy scientific function that I haven t heard about yet?

Milt shook his head I ll admit I don t know a thing about psychoanalysis Spart And I suppose a lot of them are quacks But there s a lot of good being done in the field by the ones who know what they re doing Not all therapists or whatnot are charlatans with a degree in psychology from some school nobody ever heard of Spart. A great many of them come from big universities and some of them are M D s with years of specialized train——

Look Milt have you read any of that crap they put out? I have! Can you honestly tell me for example that you believe every woman was traumatized as a child because of her penis-envy? And that she felt guilty because she didn t have one—it was cut off as punishment for her sexual desires?

I understand that the Menninger Clinic in the Midwest is doing some mighty——

I m not referring to that " Spartan said snappishly I just know the crap I ve been boning up on I've got a headful of meaningless jargon like Persona and Shadow and Anima and Animus and id and drives and collective unconscious and repression and suppression objectification and catharsis and transference and——

Psychosomatic medicine——

I m not talking about psychosomatic medicine either—that s what Healthopathy is! I m talking about mother archetypes and unconscious matrix and drive reduction and *elan vital* and analysand and psychodrama—— Oh God Milt! And I thought I was being ridiculous when I went around talking about kinetic equations!

Well—granted But it seems I ve read somewhere about somebody s theory of psychoanalysis—Horney—or someone—and it made pretty good——

sense! Spartan sneered Sure it does! Horney s the Poor Richard s Almanac of psychoanalysis The child who s mistreated or virtually abandoned will grow up feeling helpless and hostile A stitch in time saves nine Some people suffer from a basic anxiety and all that glitters is not gold. A truism a day keeps the neuroses away Milt, you don t really Look you just sit around reading it night after night as I ve been and see how it affects you

Spart, you have to admit that there are people who suffer terribly from their anxieties and phobias Kinetabs with a dollop of sulfa is not the answer

Seventy volts might be Spartan said sullenly Or a shot of metrazol But having a patient sit around saying brightly Mother—hate father—sex child—murder——

'Tetanus Milt said suddenly with a grin

Spartan s mind blocked "You go straight to hell" he said grinning back

Milt was ready to drop the subject I'm not going to tell you what not to do Spart I tried that once and LeRoy Johnson got to be governor of Kennassee Anyway I don t suppose you'll be doing any real harm just letting people sit around your pool and talk about themselves Incidentally Fartin don t let those hoodlums of mine make a nuisance of themselves at your pool Nancy said they were up almost every day last week

The subject of Mental Healthopathy was closed

But he was not to be swerved from his new enthusiasm Through his mind there drifted visions of Mental Healthopathy being an even greater success than Healthopathy itself Where he was going to find the time to pursue this new gimmick he did not consider

xv

From where they sat the group of three could look past the pool out beyond the edge of the hill to where the entire city lay under an ocean of smog In the far distance another ocean glittered flatly like a field of gold under the western sun The conversation was des-

ultory shouted snatches in the main for the other three people present were disporting themselves with loud splashes in the water

The most comfortable person present was a deep-bosomed dowager of fifty-odd She was ensconced in an easy chair that was much more plushy than the usual outdoors piece as in her life too she was the serene occupant of circumstances far plushier than are the lot of the man in the street From the well manicured hand holding the glass of lemonade to her meringue coiffure this woman Mrs Clarke Sixe was an authoritarian She was definite postive and without a trace of incertitude It was beyond her comprehension why she had not years ago been elected president of the Amalgamated Women s Social Clubs

To the left of Mrs Sixe sat the Reverend Willis Oates an as yet indifferently successful revivalist and the originator of the Hollywood Juveniles for Jesus On her right was the celebrated screen writer Ives Stanhope

In the pool were Sergei Packard the lisping jeweler Gwillian Horne a lady assistant producer and a certain Dr Spartan McClintock Terry-cloth robes lay scattered here and there and as the swimmers left the pool to enrobe themselves in them all eyes snapped quickly to the scarred back of the Mental Healthopathic Therapist and away

It was a well known fact although Dr McClintock never so much as spoke of it himself that he had been horribly tortured by the Nazis before his escape from Germany The mute evidence of his fortitude and his admirable reluctance to say anything at all about his harrowing life in Germany had aroused a profound respect in all those who knew of his experiences Out of tact and sympathy of course no one would so much as breathe a question to Dr McClintock about his European adventures and what little was known had been discreetly and confidentially bruited about by the Healthopathic Nonaffiliate Dietitian Professor Phoebe Kidd

Wrapped in his robe the therapist flicked his head at a butler who hovered in the background Mrs Sixe some lemonade? he asked Just push the cart over here now then Mr Packard what for you? Reverend I believe coffee is your preference

The group settled itself down for its fourth session A delightful breeze skimmed across the top of the ocean of smog and lifted a tendril of Gwillian Horne s metallic hair She brushed it back and

looked at the therapist expectantly the ice in her highball giving off a tinkle of excitement

The therapist leaned back in his chair and said Miss Horne, you mentioned last time something about passive conformity to society

Miss Horne Yes Well when you have such a terribly artistic temperament the way I do it s almost impossible to conform and yet if you don t——

Mr Stanhope It seems to me that the artist, the *creative* artist *commits—ah—spiritual suicide when he conforms*

Mrs Sixe Someone who deals with people with the Underpriv ileged and the poor could be called a Social Artist don t you think so? I certainly consider that in my club work—and it is work—I am *creating* I am actively creating happiness and that s all any artist can do

Miss Horne Besides if I conformed then I d be building up hos tility in myself wouldn t I?

The therapist In other words, the unit must be equated to two environments The external environment—which is the physical and the internal—which is the personality or the Persona It would seem that the individualistic or gifted unit might discover several ways of reacting to a society grosser than itself

Mr Stanhope Well like Gwillian says I guess it could knuckle under or conform

Rev Oates That s what they d all like me to do! What if Martin Luther had meekly gone on and adjusted kinematically?

The therapist Exactly

Mr Stanhope But one can t just ignore society either!

Rev Oates Oh no! It is the duty of Everyman to bring his brother by force if necessary to God You can t ignore society—you must love it no matter how sinful You ve got to make it listen!

The therapist There we have the true kinetic adjustment A token adjustment to the laws of man dictated by love and respect for the rights of others and complete rebellion against all that is false in society The active rebellion takes the form of creativeness in the artist of divine inspiration in the disciple of warmth in the char ity worker of precision in the scientist and thus exercising it hos tile repressions are relieved and kinematic balance is gradually restored

Mr Stanhope But that doesn t mean that we have to conform to what we recognize as being false in society The—uh—stifling elements Like customs say Or—oh—tribal sex taboos

The therapist The rebellious artist must refuse to be stifled

Mr Stanhope He should ignore what people think of him?

The therapist I believe Beethoven went about with egg on his waistcoat And the score of the Ninth Symphony in his head

Mrs Sixe Some people are simply—superior to others that s all

Miss Horne Like Irv Thalberg If he had conformed, I can imagine what movies would be like today!

Mr Stanhope Or Hemingway

The therapist All examples of the gifted kinetic unit adjusting to society only in the barest essentials and balancing its own equation through active dispersion of hostility in the form of accomplishment Plotkin of Heidelberg is another example

Mr Stanhope And McClintock!

Mrs Sixe Hear hear!

Miss Horne In short—to hell with all those people who want to tramp all over us—oh excuse me Reverend

Rev Oates I recognize Hell Miss Horne! And I agree with you Those who wish to trample me and my Hollywood Juveniles for Jesus are seeking Hell And it will be to Hell with them if they don t come to God!

Mr Stanhope I think it is the *duty* of the gifted to rebel If we do what we want to do any way we can find to do it and to hell with what anybody thinks about it we will be leaders instead of the led

The therapist Yes the gifted unit can vibrate only for itself in the way it must and if it follows the dictates of its superconscious without regard for the scorn or the plaudits of the masses it will create And once creative it will become wholly co-ordinated wholly successful But this must be noted—success is not necessarily happiness Happiness is for the weak the nitwitted or for children Success is for the adult the perfectly kinematically adjusted unit

Mr Packard Yeth!

Mrs Sixe That s exactly the way I've always felt and just didn t know how to put it into words All these years I've been searching for happiness through helping others Why if I suddenly got happiness it would be like getting a lollypop!

The therapist wished desperately the hour would end Then he turned his gaze thoughtfully on Mr Packard This was the first time the pathetic little tycoon had said anything during a session But that yeth' of his was an explosive revelation Well the therapist thought suppressing a yawn Sergei Packard is probably a world beating success compared to the rest of the kids who came out of the same ghetto he did Packard he mused The only one here who isn t an impossible Blabbermouth I feel sorry for him think I ll hint he stick around for another drink Nice little guy he didn t get to meet Joni at that New Year s party—want him to see her Much better looking than Isolde by far Wonder if there is any thing in that transference nonsense Stanhope tries to monopolize me and Sixe acts like everybody s big sister Sibling transference oh what rot This is what they call psychodrama Every little Blabbermouth acting out his own fantasy of how important he is But hell they seem to love it Milt s crazy this is doing them good!

Two days later the newspapers carried several interesting items The first concerned the nighttime activities of one lovely Miss Joni Jolyon actress who was seen flitting about town in the com pany of two attentive swains Sergei Packard of the gem emporiums and the magnetic Dr Spartan McClintock The second was head lined on the religious pages somewhat as follows

EVANGELIST TELLS CRITICS TO GO TO HELL

Before an enthusiastic congregation of teen agers the fiery Rev erend Willis Oates declared in his revival tent last night that those who disagreed with his tactics could go to Hell Because that s where they re headed for anyway believe you me when they say bringing you wonderful young people to Jesus is not digni fied!

XVI

Suddenly it seemed Spartan was confronted by M D s every where he went At a drinking function in which the citizens of Blab bermouthry fought bitterly with boast and prideful declaration, making an arena of the lavish apartment in which the party took

place he was approached by a swart individual in a navy blue pin stripe double breasted suit

You re Doctor McClintock aren t you? the man said, introducing himself as an M.D I ve heard so much about your work Doctor"

"Yes Spartan said stoically waiting to be insulted.

I understand that you refer your patients to—ahh—other medical practitioners when the need arises

"I do

Doctor let me be frank Are your dealings with the practitioners in my branch of medicine reciprocal? No I can tell by your expression that they are not Now—I have an office not far from yours well equipped I was wondering perhaps we could——

Are you asking me to share my patients with you?

You re very blunt Doctor Let s say that I m——"

Let s say you re sniffing around asking to split fees with me

"You re jumping——

I ve sunk lower than I thought Spartan said distinctly if scum like you feels free to approach me What did you say your name was again Doctor?

And a day or so later he was again confronted with a problem of ethics His ethics alone for the state allowed him complete freedom without the bounds of criminal acts Bootmaker came in as Spartan was eating lunch at his desk I want to discuss something with you Bootmaker said heartily drawing up a chair In fact Higbee and I have worked out all the details already We should have our own sanitarium Spart

A gulp of coffee scalded his throat and Spartan gasped "What in hell for?

"The Maternity Clinic for one thing If you were still doing any of it you d know that our patients don t care for the hospital we send them to for delivery

Well Cedars of Lebanon doesn t approve of D E M s and Healthopathists I m terribly sorry Spartan said

Granted Bootmaker said calmly "And our patients don t care particularly for the hospitals we can send them to Therefore—the obvious answer is to have our own little sanitarium Now Higbee

Caught off guard Spartan smiled Oh you found out about that did you? All right we re even Hoary You ve got us a sanitarium and I ve got us a factory to start making our own Kinetabs

And since you ve hired a Ph D in chemistry Bootmaker guessed accurately I might as well retaliate with an M D

Nope But Spartan continued to grin That doesn t follow You know as well as I that Stanley s not an outcast in his field Any M D you hire would have to be

Bootmaker shrugged I give up Have it your way then He laughed suddenly and slapped Spartan on the back. Spart, is there anything that can stop us now? Do you realize how far we re traveled in two and a half short years?

The drive mechanism in Spartan halted briefly allowing him one gasping look over his shoulder before whirring up again We ve just begun Hoary he said This is just the bare start

They were friends on the surface this late afternoon Climbing back in the car beside Spartan Bootmaker said Why don t you have dinner with us tonight We can get this thing rolling afterwards and maybe have Quent drop over

Us Spartan thought wryly Only six months ago I d have fallen all over myself for a chance to get at Boots Then he heard himself saying nevertheless with bewildering alacrity A great idea! Besides I haven t seen our budding pianist in a coon s age

He would have to call Joni and tell her he wouldn t be able to make it that evening Right after the Mental Healthopathy session (which he had come to call M H in his mind) he could dash over to Bootmaker s He felt the old desire for Isolde firing up in him

this war s over Bootmaker was saying we ll buy every fancy piece of equipment made And move the offices of course We re crowded together like sardines

If I remember correctly Spartan reminded him smugly I said the same thing a long time ago I said we d have to build our own offices as soon as the restrictions were lifted

So you did so you did Bootmaker said cheerfully Suddenly he laughed uproariously Spart do you realize what is going to happen to us? We ve going to become revered! Like Palmer

Like Plotkin! Spartan supplied hilariously Like poor martyred Herr Doctor Plotkin!

Yes And as suddenly Bootmaker was no longer laughing

Squinting against the setting sun as it blazed through the windshield at them he said slyly Incidentally just how did your back get scarred up?

I raped a plantation owner s daughter Spartan said promptly and he horsewhipped me The statement had the ring of repeti tion in it To whom had he said that, and when?

He remembered To Allie of course to Allie

almost believe you Bootmaker was saying humorously

He set himself out to be amiable to Isolde and she accepted his tributes serenely They ate outdoors and watching her in the candlelight he would have called her translucent Compared to Joni s sturdy orange juice type of Californian beauty Isolde was as deli cate as though she had been blown in glass

He conducted himself with a bland circumspection concealing his protean emotional response to her now a custard fondness de void of the lumps of carnality and with sudden change now rapacious In turn Isolde neither insulted him by preening nor by deferring to him as though he were ninety

Then with a sense of collapse it came to him at the meal s end that she was not being friendly but merely absent minded She was not receptive—just thoughtful

Nursing his one drink for the evening Bootmaker said jocularly Where are you and Tony off to tonight Isolde?

We re not she murmured

Bootmaker raised a brow at Spartan a neat hairy growth on his face he manipulated as precisely as his mustache "Poor Tony He has a nice voice but he s hardly adept at the violin

Violin? Spartan said obtusely You mean our G Singleton Ferrar the Adonis of the Diet is taking fiddle lessons?

Second fiddle Bootmaker pursued fatuously "To Isolde s piano Or haven t you noticed his woeful expression lately?

I ve been rather busy Spartan said growing short, to notice Tony at all

Suddenly Isolde cast him a conspiratorial grin Come to think of it me too Doc

Now Bootmaker attended his daughter closely Oh? Someone new?

Guess again Isolde said Her eyes were almost black, the pupils

dilated with some inner excitement Now she seemed bent on teasing her father directing what she said to Spartan so as to keep some immensely pleasing discovery from coming to Bootmaker too quickly

All of a sudden I ve been awfully busy Doc In fact—in fact, I m going to concertize!

Bootmaker leaned back That s right Spart. I m arranging to rent Wilshire Ebell next season

Or maybe Isolde said "not until the season after that! She turned her glowing gaze directly on Bootmaker We d better put that off a year Dad Then after I've gotten my feet wet I ll really be able to dive in Get some confidence—and wipe the tomatoes off my brow you might say—before we turn Goldberg loose on me!

Who s Goldberg? Spartan was saying his words colliding with those of Bootmaker who was asking Isolde, what are you talking about?

A critic Isolde said using that as a springboard to launch her swiftly into Dad don t you understand? I ve been offered a con tract! To go on a tour of the South and Midwest. There'll be a soprano a violinist myself oh you know the sort of thing" She laughed growing nervous despite her exuberance I kept it a secret until I was sure they wanted me Somebody told me about this agency and dared me to audition Dad?

Bootmaker s face white like a corpse s in the candlelight of its bier and his voice uncompromising as death frightened her into a sudden silence Are you crazy? he asked in a tone that would have made the question equally applicable to himself Cheap hotels bad food someone attempting to sneak into your room in the dead of night—— He broke into a shrilling Do you think you can bring Scarlatti to hillbillies with hookworm? My God don t you know the Midwest is one big sty of farmers oafs Okies Democrats and pigs? What would you play for them? Just tell me! George Gershwin? Or maybe the Warsaw Concerto ? Isolde Bootmaker playing a potpourri of Broadway hits! Why leave home? Why not go play in a bar right here? Certainly go play on a stage built over the bar so the drunks can look up your skirts while you give them a reet rendition of Star dust ! Why stop there? Why——

I think Spartan interrupted flatly, 'you had better stop right there yourself Hoary Yet a deep secret spot in his vanity took pleasure in Isolde s stricken face

You keep your fat mouth out of this Spart! Bootmaker shouted. Isolde s my daughter and she ll goddamn well listen to what I've *got to say!*"

Bootmaker who was never profane And Isolde who was never pathetic who was incapable of understanding humiliation The candlelight flickering on their faces brought out a resemblance that Spartan had never noticed before in the pair About each set mouth, in both the plump jowly face and the thin glass boned one were clenched the strong indomitable muscles of the intolerably arrogant, the mercilessly cruel They were exactly alike as Isolde gathered herself for battle

Unless you interfere now Spartan s mind said calculatingly she'll be beyond need of your protection Hoary he persisted if I remember rightly Isolde s free white and over twenty-one——

"Shut up Bootmaker said in warning

"I'll make you a bet that if she goes one night in a place like Kansas City " He laughed meaningfully "Boots baby have you ever seen Kansas City? Or East St Louis?

Isolde pushed her chair back and rose "You smug stupid—both of you! She threw down her napkin and it struck one of the candles extinguishing it and knocking it over Her heels were loud in the quiet night as she ran into the house

"Leave her alone!" Spartan said to Bootmaker sharply

"Why don t you keep—— Bootmaker began but subsided sinking down into his place again

From the house came a defiant banging of the piano music that was unfamiliar to Spartan What s that?"

Bootmaker said bitterly 'The Warsaw Concerto I didn t even know she had the music

In spite of himself Spartan sounded to his own ears more foxy than fatherly when he said quietly Let me go talk to her Hoary I m more or less on the outside here maybe I can soothe her down" He rose to follow Isolde "But you really ought to think it over at least Maybe it would do her good to see what it s like to be out on her own

'No! That s absolutely out! Bootmaker shouted again

Spartan shrugged and went through the French doors and down the hallway to the music room Isolde was hurling herself at the piano crying and pounding

He bent over her and lifted her fists from the keys Boots are you supposed to be a musician or Bette Davis?

You go to hell she sobbed

Now look honey I think your father will reconsider I ll work on him for you and Quent will too Come on look at me and stop that dramatic blubbering You re making an awful fool of your——" He was suddenly babbling and not caring pulling her up and taking advantage of her passivity to force her up against him roughly Listen Boots—— With his hand on the small of her back it was as if he could crush that glass pelvis and have done with this febrile desire of his once and for all destroying its object I ll take you on the tour any goddamn place stop crying! You won t have to go on a two bit tour—I ll hire a hall in every city in the whole damn country You re old enough to get married—he d *have* to realize you re not a kid any longer then Boots I d do anything go anywhere—I d make you happy Please shut up a minute! Please please shut up-a

He released her and she dropped back to the bench Didn t you hear a thing I said? Isolde? Defeated he watched her lay her streaked face on the keys and then he quietly left the room licking her tears from his lips

Three nights later his phone rang just before seven

'Spart Bootmaker said without preamble did you see Tony today?

No he was supposed to be out with Doc Stanley buying up some tablet machines

Call Stanley and see "

Why what——

" and then call me back immediately

Spartan did call him back immediately Tony didn t work today he said dully Apparently he was busy getting married to your daughter He hung up there was nothing more to say and the door chimes were sounding The first to arrive for the evening s session of group therapy was impatiently demanding to be let in

They chose to talk about love that session Love—and because Ives Stanhope had been reading books again—Otto Rank The need for love they decided sneering was weak and neurotic the very need" for it spurious The kinematically balanced unit could be

psychologically ideally centered only in itself Especially the creative unit The creative unit couldn t be selfless—paradox right there Ended in frustration and all that sort of thing every time they tried it just wound up in the fix they were today None of them was earning a fraction of what he was really worth no one walked before them drifting their paths with petals

They transferred all over the place They battened on him and each other and when they finally left he was thirsty and angry and exhausted

Their *creative* work They were a disreputable attorney who specialized in notorious messy divorces the cast-off wife of a studio executive a viperous set designer a spirited Lesbian who took her seductions straight like a man and a model who was currently being kept and whose brain what there was of it was located exactly where the seat of her intelligence might be expected to be Yet when they had come to him tonight each had been still possessed of at least a modicum of ruth And he had diligently and in fine destructive fettle relieved them of a great part of this unnecessary burden

He sprawled on his couch when he was finally alone and looked out at his swimming pool It was absurd this mania of Blabber mouthry for water People scooped out holes in the ground for their pools even before they dug one for the foundation of the house But *a property without a swimming pool would be as much an anachronism* as an expensive floozie without breasts He thought suddenly of Joni of the virginal almost prepubertal development of her chest, and decided as he had known he would to take his bruised vanity to her

Well well she said when he appeared at her door just stopping by on your way somewhere?

He brushed past her to go into the room and throw himself down in a chair At once Joni was at his side and then so that he would not miss a single word on his lap

She berated him soundly for fifteen minutes He gathered that she felt neglected

and to sum up Joni was saying

Oh goody Spartan said

" to sum up sometimes I don t even feel like your slut I just feel like your whipping boy—I m just someone you can——

He stopped the rest with his mouth and all his mind and conscious

ness flowed from his head into his body Immediately insistence be came urgency and he rose carrying her hearing his voice saying gratefully "What would I do without you?

XVII

Grudgingly he took pity on Bootmaker Where once were firm cheeks there was now gaunt bone the flesh having departed down wards into the jowl sacks Bootmaker gnawed at his mustache constantly and in consequence it twitched above his mouth in harried flight from the searching teeth He belched these days discreetly, frequently and Spartan suspected that his partner was often in severe pain

Susceptible always to the ill and suffering in this instance Spartan s pity was mixed with guilt As though acting on a posthypnotic sug gestion Isolde had done as he told her Except that she had chosen Tony

She ll come back he said as much to console himself as Boot maker

I know I sent them five thousand and offered Tony a job at the San as dietitian They can live with me I ve simply had to face it, Spart She s young and healthy she needs a husband

I would have been glad to oblige Spartan said deliberately

But Bootmaker only shook his head neither surprised nor angry You understand her even less than Tony does And he loves her— you just covet her He closed his eyes and belched quietly and painfully

Poor slob Spartan thought that stomach of his is giving him hell.

XVIII

More and more he had been drifting away from Healthopathy as it had been originally Then suddenly it took an epidemic upswing and because of Spartan s postgraduate assistants there were sporadic outbursts in other parts of the state San Diego now had four Healthopathists and Bakersfield and San Francisco each two There was one in Santa Barbara as well as in Palm Springs (there was a happy man!) Fresno and oddly enough a small California town called Auburn which nested at the foot of the Donner Trail.

What techniques these pioneering Healthopathists used in their practices Spartan often wondered He assumed but never bothered to substantiate this that they subjected their patients to a hodge podge of spinal adjustments colonics grape juice starvation diets and Kinetabs They might even have referred a patient or two to an M D when the going got rough

They might have but Spartan doubted it. Gradually as the San opened to its fullest operation the patients from all over the state began to trickle in Bootmaker and his staff of practitioners handled *everything There was no disease too virulent no condition too seri ous* for them to spare it their ministrations Only Spartan himself still sent the seriously ill from the office to Milt or some other physician At the San those who entered had to abandon their hope at the door

Spartan shrugged mentally he told himself he could not keep his eye on Hoary Higbee and company constantly Besides Hoary having tasted of Spartan s temper once showed no further signs of hungering for it

And Spartan had other fish to fry There was an element in Mental Healthopathy that was slowly beginning to excite him Even more than vitamins for the vitamin-deficient M H was jazzing up the suc cess-deficient In his group sessions the transference was truly re markable each member coming to feel that he was indeed a member of a close knit, mutually admiring family Spartan carefully chose his groups so that there would be no duplication in ambitions or goals There was never more than one actor one writer one radio announcer one producer one society woman one lawyer one social worker of any kind one businessman or one nymphomaniac in any one group Thus they were able to use each other freely as sounding boards for the most preposterous of boastful pronouncements with holding nothing for fear of a rival s sneers And it so happened that many of these boasts were so enthusiastically accepted that they be came *fait accompli* so that the originator went out high of heart and bursting with confidence Bursting with confidence and plugged with ruthlessness

They came to Spartan perhaps because phonies themselves they wanted to learn the philosophy and *modus operandi* of one who was rapidly becoming the master Blabbermouth of them all

Only Sergei Packard understood and he remained a patient out of

sheer friendship Rumpelstiltskin he murmured once in a hilarious lisp to Spartan

What was that Sergei? Spartan said sharply

Now go thlay dragonth Packard said enigmatically It was his sole contribution verbally for a number of weeks He liked to sit in Spartan s hunting lodge bar sampling Spartan s Scotch and listening intently with a smile on his gentle face while Spartan encouraged the neurotic drives of his patients and where no neuroses existed created some Sergei gave the impression had anyone silenced himself enough to notice of a spectator at a highly diverting theater in the round Of his own plans and ambitions he said nothing except to Spartan privately Once he showed him the architect s plans for a number of stores he wanted to build as soon as the war was over Spartan looked at them politely at first and then with interest In his mind rose a clean lined building of austere beauty He decided to call it his Healthopathy Center

Other M H clients were more noisy about their accomplish ments Mrs Sixe went East to a convention and was elected president of Amalgamated by the simple expedient of employing the dirtiest politics ever devised On her return she must have seen everywhere about town the billboards proclaiming the massive revivals of the Hollywood Juveniles for Jesus that were going on up and down the state Now of course there were also the Hollywood Mothers for Mary the Hollywood Fathers for God the Los Angeles Businessmen for Christian Commerce and the Southern California Athletes for Christian Fair Play Gwillian Horne the now movie producer spoke at one tent meeting on the topic 'The Silver Screen Needs Jesus Too and did quite well except for a Freudian slip of the tongue here and there

The less colorful men of God moaned from their pulpits to empty churches about the defeat of Christianity before the Hordes of the Reverend Willis Oates But certain rabbis and Catholic priests were seen to read the religious news in the papers and chuckle richly Spartan himself met a young priest at a charity affair and was pestered the entire evening by questions that all began Doctor I know you *can t reveal professional confidences but the motivations of this Rev* erend Oates simply *fascinate* me Do you happen to know

Spartan could not rescue himself by saying simply Relax Padre the guy s just an entrepreneur

Ives Stanhope was no less a spectacular success It had become his habit to appear boldly about town with several pale beautiful young men in tow They were always lamblike creatures and when they looked at Ives their gazes were soft with gratitude Invariably they were studying the harp or engaged in writing a slim volume of triolets or perhaps painting a one-eyed Madonna holding a teratological mishap on her lap but whatever the particular artistic bent Ives fed *clothed and succored his lambs In turn he himself was exhibiting* the first limp signs of manliness and in his career his star was ascending What feeble talent he possessed was burgeoning for he was happy he was continually in love and he had learned at Spartan s knee not to give a damn Unconsciously he had picked up one or two of Spartan s mannerisms and he used them to emphasize a point and especially when he was girding himself to squash someone presumptuous He was perhaps the prime product of M H Spartan often thought wryly—a hard nosed mind in a healthy body

And too Ives was engaged in writing a book about Healthopathy and more specifically—Spartan

Now infrequently and it would be less as the months went by Spartan looking at himself in the mirror would glimpse on his face the doom of his old age In another ten years fifteen at the most he knew he would face that fat and fruitless senility that awaits the clever charlatan as well as the witless His time for doing and remedying even for remission would be past and the time for remembrance alone completely upon him

But these glimpses of himself came to him more and more rarely until when he finally grew a mustache he did not see at all that he had come very slightly to resemble Horace Bootmaker

He was making plans for another symposium this time emphasizing Mental Healthopathy entirely of course From the several psychologists who were assisting him at the present in order to learn his theories he intended to pick his panel But he needed a further gimmick to draw the crowd

Reading the Sunday papers and drinking countless cups of coffee that Joni served to him in bed he came across an ad for a department store It gave him a rather uninspired idea Sometime early in 1946

Healthopathy could celebrate its tenth anniversary From 1936 from its cradle in Heidelberg to 1946 and its tremendous success in Los Angeles the most progressive city in the world Something like that He was bored

He turned the page still mulling over the idea and found himself looking at Governor LeRoy Johnson of Kennassee With the nimble governor were a group of amputee vets looking on admiringly as Le Roy lit a cigarette with a prosthetic claw Governor LeRoy Johnson of Kennassee who lost his left arm a number of years ago while valiantly helping to quell a prison riot demonstrated the modern developments in

What s the matter with you? Joni said curiously Whatever it is it couldn t be that funny She knelt on the bed beside him and breathed over his shoulder Why Spart I m ashamed at you! I don t see anything so cotton pickin funny in those poor boys losing their arms!

Not the vets he choked the governor

Oh? Joni studied the picture at length I don t like him she announced positively He looks queasy Why do you know him?

He was once Spartan said relishing the conversation a patient of mine

Joni was impressed He was? Where?

In Kennassee

You mean when you were duplicating the Plotkin experiments and all that?

That s right

She looked at him fondly and grinned You goddamned liar I don t know what you were up to back there in Kennassee but it didn t have anything to do with Healthopathy I ll bet a cookie Abruptly she returned to LeRoy When was he your patient?

Oh I don t remember the year

He turned his head and met her gaze He knew that whatever he did to this girl whatever cruelties of mind and pride he might subject her to he could trust her She had chosen him she considered herself forever committed But he said calmly I amputated LeRoy s arm

I don t want to hear about it she said suddenly If you could see the look on your face when you said that I don t want to hear about what they did to you back there When I go to sleep at

night, I don t want any nightmares about people hurting you and you hurting them back!" She pulled the paper from his hands and tore it violently Then almost shouting at him as he stared at her she cried, "You don t know how you can look sometimes! Ugly *inside!* And I don t know what made you that way and I don t want to "

"What brought this on anyway?" he said amused. "Just the picture of the noble governor?

"No " She looked away from him "I did something the other day I went to the library There s some kind of a handbook about prisons that tells you all about the prisons in this country I m now one of the few people who now know that men can get strapped in this country "

Spartan was unruffled. "Well " he said reaching for his coffee again, "at least you ve come a lot closer than the other women who ve seen my back."

"The Nazis!" Joni exploded oratorically "Looks like we could have taught them a thing or two right here in this country I don t want to talk about it!"

"Then shut up " Spartan said "But it so happens that those scars have come in mighty handy He laughed until his hand shook and he had to hand her the coffee "And at the time my nose was so out of joint I was breathing around a corner "

"You shut up!" she cried "It s *not* funny "

Milton Salpinger loved the picture of LeRoy Johnson He cut it out and stuck it on the kids bulletin board in the basement play room Given the slightest encouragement by Spartan he would toast the governor and embark on a long paean concerning LeRoy's bravery integrity and possible paretic condition Spartan was wracked with laughter for Milt would chew his cheeks mercilessly during the entire speech

Then, in another medium of public information there appeared an article the first of three that killed the LeRoy thing for Milt for ever He had something new to kid about now

XIX

Spartan had underestimated Ives All along he was sure that the book divided into three parts would remain unpublished and forgotten as had "Remembered Miracle " It did n

Both a book publisher and a self designated sophisticated magazine bought it Sandwiched in with stories about young women who app ir ently were unaware that love had anything to do with their vulvas was the first of three articles

MEDICAL MAGICIAN
by
IVES STANHOPE

In Hollywood these days the stars have forgotten to talk about themselves and are talking about a certain dynamic medico instead Everywhere you go in dressing rooms in bars at parties the conversation invariably gets around to one man a brilliant forceful and electrifying personality whose career has burst upon a jaded town like the advent of Lana Turner on a married man s subconscious Aptly named he is a Spartan who plunges daily in to the icy waters of Shrodinger s wave mechanics theory and thrives on it Not only that he has half of Hollywood taking the plunge with him

His name is Spartan McClintock the originator in this country of that form of medical magic known as Healthopathy And if you haven t undergone Healthopatic therapy—at least here in Holly wood—you re not even warm much less alive The list of Dr Mc Clintock s patients reads like the guest list at a premiere and

My God' Spartan crowed to Ives Why it s great man'

He called Milt and listened frowning for five minutes while Milt talked Finally breaking in he said sniffishly Well I m glad you think the article s that funny Milt Why I called—I m giving a party for Ives Stanhope I m having some pretty weird characters along with my staff and the Quarleses There ll be the Reverend Willis Oates——

A squeal came from the other end of the line and he found he was talking to Nancy

Hello you dynamic Spartan you! You kinetic Valentino' Did you say the Reverend Willis Oates? I ll be there with bells on And if Milt doesn t want to go I ll come as your date Who else will be there?

Joni said It s great For what it is She thumbed the pages of the magazine wistfully I wish I could write I d say that you re hon

estly not a bastard And not half that handsome either it makes you sound like some crummy movie star with baked hair

Isolde put it as follows Yes I thought it was very interesting I mean I m afraid I haven t gotten around to finishing it yet, but I— Oh there are going to be two more? Imagine

Her husband said gingerly Somehow it doesn t do you justice Doctor I hope the next two articles show your intellectual side more

Her father said Stanhope is an artist It takes years of practice to be that mediocre

Having been roundly insulted by those he considered his friends he was then fulsomely flattered by nearly everyone else

Right after that the crank letters began to pour in

And two more which he treasured Both in some tender nostalgic way made him want to cry

Dear Spart

More power to you! Buddy is frothing at the mouth and going around yelling at everybody And everybody else in Dublin is busy telling everybody else how they always knew you had it in you

Except me I didn t have the good sense to see it when it was right under my nose

All the best wishes in the world
Imagene

P.S Please don t answer this It would spoil it

And the other

Dear Doctor

The doctor s wife takes that magazine and gave me the article I wish I could tell you how proud it makes me feel to know I once scrubbed for you and were your assistant I only wish Dr Fuqua had lived to see it too

Warden Weems died last year and Mr Mitch is warden now He s a good warden as you can guess

That s all because you know there s nothing to write about here We ve had some swell results with penicillin. But I guess you know how wonderful it is

I m proud to have served you Doctor It's funny where I had to go to meet a great man

Your sincere friend
Lincoln And Lee

My God Link Spartan thought stung *don t you honestly know what I m up to?*

XX

On the advice of his publicity agent he planned for the Mental Healthopathy Symposium to take place the night after the second installment of Medical Magician reached the newsstands The use of the old deteriorated hall in downtown Los Angeles had been abandoned and he had rented instead a theater on the outskirts of Hollywood which had once housed a legitimate theater group Two weeks before the symposium the posters began to go up around town and the invitations (the entire lower floor of the auditorium was reserved for invitees only) engraved on their covers with the golden *H* of Healthopathy were being folded slipped into thick cream en velopes and mailed

Slowly a high state of exhilaration began to ascend in Spartan On reading the requests that came in from everywhere for him to speak to conduct forums to appear on a radio panel of intellects to grace functions all over the nation for causes patriotic medical charitable literary political and one for the sole dedicated purpose of getting drunk the intoxication of being notorious colored his judgment so that he began sincerely to believe that he was famous instead

And now unconsciously there appeared in his attitude to Milt the faintest hint of condescension Milt accepted it with equanimity if at first he recognized the change in Spartan at all He complained only when he could no longer tolerate Spartan s agitated pacing his incessant excitement

You ve bitten off a big bite was his comment And you d better relax and chew it or you ll choke on it The racket s getting you down

Spartan grew huffy Look Milt I m the first to admit that the Kinetabs thing was a racket But Mental Healthopathy——

Is an even bigger racket Milt supplied but he grinned to show he meant no offense

Its unlike you Milt to criticize before examining a thing *know nothing about it*

Oh dear me Milt murmured Lets change the subject Lets talk about when you re going to marry Joni When you?

If it s any of your business—never Spartan snapped He ros irritation and paced off the room

Why not? She s crazy about you she s good for you she s k she s—— Well I ll bet she s damn good in bed

Spartan stopped at a bookcase and his eyes fell on a worn cop Cecil s *Medicine* that Milt must have used in med school A floa regret and resentment that was always with him suddenly faste on *Joni clouding his affection for her Of course she s good in* Joni s a semi whore It s her business to be good in bed

There was a silence before Milt said slowly I m sorry I bro this up Let s forget it

Spartan could not let it go All right what would you call he pick her up one Christmas Eve I m in bed with her immedia thereafter and two weeks after that I m supporting her

As far as Joni is concerned Milt said coldly she s your v Whatever life she might have been planning for herself went over board as soon as she met you Now she spends her days shop with Nancy and talking recipes and trying to mother my brats

Life she was planning Spartan sneered When I met her was just one more little steno pounding a typewriter and telling self she was going to be a ga reat movie star She can go back to typewriter any time she chooses Milt

"And I ll bet a rusty old speculum that if she hadn t met you sl have been married and happily pregnant by now A damsite hap than she is in that men s magazine setup you got her in now Oh hell with it I m not trying to argue you into marrying Joni I just th you should give the kid her due A whore is someone who gets u noon in time to greet the lover she s taken on behind your back you know what Nancy says about Joni? She says she s wistful N that s a helluva term to apply to a whore isn t it?

It might apply Spartan said in an unreasonable rage to so one who s getting too big for her britches

Too big for her britches! Milt said equally angry "Well I *hadn t quite thought of it that way no I hadn t But I can see t*

you re quite right After all who is Joni to want to marry the Medical Magician of Beverly Hills? The—and I quote loosely—the most arresting figure in a landscape composed solely of the glamorous the enormously successful, and the world renowned If Spartan Mc Clintock is as disgruntled members of the medical profession have been heard to say—uh let s see now how did that go? Oh yes— merely a foible of the distorted personality of Hollywood, then he is nevertheless the most fabulous foible ever taken to a collective heart Baloney Spartan baloney! Who the hell do you think you are?

I think I m a man who s about to go home Spartan said icily Thanks for the drink and the charming conversation

O K Milt said rising O K You asked for it I hate to do this Spart but it s going to hurt you a lot worse than me He came to Spartan s side shoved away the arm that was lying across the top of the bookshelf and began to paw among the magazines piled in uneven heaps Finding the issue of the *Journal of the A M.A* he wanted he held it out to Spartan You didn t happen to read the latest issue by any chance did you fabulous Doctor McClintock?

The hell with it Spartan said a coldness creeping along his fin gers I keep up the best I can but I m too busy——

Yeah Milt said He opened the magazine to the back Here Go on and read it The American Medical Association thinks you re fabulous enough to write about too Only they re briefer and more to the point

He read the first few words of the short paragraph

> *Kinetabs A glossly mislabeled indifferent vitamin product The manufacturer a ridiculous and posturing quack Spartan McClintock has now ventured to adver tise himself in one of the largest circulation maga zines in the country

Milt took the *Journal* from his hands Enough Spart? he asked quietly

You re a real pal aren t you? Spartan said There was some thing wrong with his vision and his throat had closed in a spasm so painful that he could barely press the air from his chest

I m trying to be Milt said Believe it or not

And I tried! Spartan said too loudly I tried to do it as honorably as possible I rescued a lot of people who would have been dead by now if they d continued on in their game of musical quacks I sent them to you to others The ones I kept I helped I knew what I was doing and I did it well Not once did I ever keep a patient unless I knew positively that all he needed was the vitamin therapy I could give him Or at most a bit of sulfa On each and every one I personally made as much of a diagnosis as possible. And certainly enough to know whether I should send him on to someone else I m a physician Milt! I am! I practiced for thirteen years I ran a clinic I did lab work I did surgery I did everything I "

'Take it easy Milt said

I had over three hundred men under my care No matter what came along I had to handle it Without X ray with one lone *nigger and a drunk to help me and the nigger I had to train myself* I had a drug room stocked mainly with samples that I begged from the drug companies and little else I scrubbed the floors when the ward wasn t immaculate enough to suit me I washed out the toilets and bedpans myself——

You re flipping your lid over nothing Milt said How is the *Journal* to know you——

Spartan collapsed End of speech Milt The hell with it Let them say I m a quack By their lights I most certainly am By my own lights I am too But if my patients are anything to judge me by then let anyone stack theirs against mine! Look at the record of Mental Healthopathy Is there another psychologist, psychiatrist psychoanalyst M D or otherwise in town in this section of the country in the entire damn country who can demonstrate what he has done for his patients as clearly as I? Look at the list! And look who put three fourths of them where they are now! Do I tell them to be satisfied with the least you can get out of life? Do I yap and yammer about the Group and Integrating with what a bunch of moron social workers have decided to designate as Society? Do I hammer them down and——

"I haven t the faintest idea what you do Milt said Spart will you simmer down I m sorry as hell I brought this on I honestly didn t think——

You didn t think! Why you fat smug—— He swung around

abruptly and leaned again t the bookcase hiding himself from Milt. I can t seem to shut up can I? But the *Journal* wasn t justified Milt This time I don t think it was justified

Milton Salpinger M D, remained absolutely silent

The hell with it Spartan said He laughed shakily Fix us some more drinks Milt We ll toast a ridiculous posturing quack

Wisely Dr Salpinger still did not speak But he did slosh brandy into the glasses and hand Spartan his Finally he said tentatively I ve been having a rough time with one of my patients Spart Chronic prostatitis He s unmarried about thirty——

Why tell me about it? Spartan asked childishly

Oh come off it Milt s voice indicated that he was on sure ground now And pay attention will you? I want your opinion on this

XXI

The Mental Healthopathy Symposium was one of the social affairs of the season The society women tried to outdress the stars the businessmen tried to outglare the professional men and the more vociferous citizens of Blabbermouthry tried to outscream each other s frenzied greetings and cries of delight at finding each other there In the second row Professor Phoebe Kidd shrilled like a steam whistle to a debonair Ives Stanhope and just beyond her sat the curly haired ebullient G Singleton Ferrar and his bored contemptuous wife

In the third row was a fair sampling of Mental Healthopathy products Pops Chaparral an ex-cowboy star row hitting the Holy Trail as guitarist for the Reverend Willis Oates the reverend himself spiritual leader and organizer of the Hollywood Juveniles for Jesus Mrs Clarke K Sixe president of the National Amalgamated Womens Clubs and her husband Rickev Kuhn a bookie who had recently inherited a syndicate after the sudden explosive demise of a business rival a radio writer who was currently producing directing writing a half hour series on the evils of alcoholism a lady attorney who had given up the law and her husband to go live with a wealthy retired judge and an actor who was rapidly getting a reputation as a great screen lover—and that he was although in a slightly different way than his fan clubs would care to believe

There were others There was an auditorium full of them and

they had come not so much to hear Dr Spartan McClintock speak, as to be able to *say* that they had heard him speak. The subject of his talk incidentally was to be Neuroses—Stigmata of the Gifted

Whatever that meant

It meant among other things that Dr McClintock vaguely agreed with Karl Menninger rather disputed Karen Horney rather para phrased Otto Rank and was utterly confused by Jung Adler and a man named Gestalt (most of the audience thought Gestalt was a man s name) whom nobody understands anyway And should by any chance anyone understand the latter it was certainly no concern of Dr McClintock a man busied with flashing his photogenic grin at appropriate intervals during his talk

It meant that Dr McClintock considered dreams to be the ex creta of the mind thoughts cast off after the meat of experience had been absorbed by the unit Dreams like excreta should therefore be considered in the diagnosis of an unhealthy personality but like excreta also they should not be considered the living flesh of the patient himself

It meant that Dr McClintock was positive that everyone within hearing of his voice was gifted and therefore neurotic Or neurotic and therefore gifted he was not too clear on that point

It meant that Beethoven wore egg on his waistcoat Van Gogh mutilated himself Plotkin bit his fingernails Jesus thought he was the Son of God Byron was an incestuous satyr Captain John Smith was a braggart Bach toadied to nobility at the same time he was composing a quodlibet at the end of the Goldberg Variations (and what chucklehead of today group integrated and loved for his sweet moronic self alone is capable of appreciating anything of higher mu sical worth than a ballad concerning some kind of horse-drawn con veyance with Victorian trimming on its top?) or perhaps I am merely misinformed Dr McClintock said with thin sarcasm and the vanilla flavored mass produced arts of today created by artists all leveled down to one Common Man plane are as magnif icent as the *Eroica* or Titian s Duke of Norfolk and I m too much of an asocial misanthropic neurotic to know it!

Isolde Bootmaker Ferrar who had once remarked to Dr McClin tock that he rather looked like Titian s Duke in that he had the same maniacal glare was seen to shake violently although she made no sound

It meant that Alexander the Great had a murderous rage that Proust was a paranoid recluse that Lincoln suffered from melan cholia and Napoleon from an inferiority complex and that in spite of the breakfast egg on the waistcoat the severed ear, the stubby nails the hallucinations the boasts the servility the uncontrollable fury the paranoia the melancholia the manic depressive psychosis those gifted neurotics changed the world with their talents regardless of what the gregarious integrated lumpish nonentity on the street might have thought about it—and go thou and do likewise!

And if for some obscure or ridiculous reason you personally do not feel capable of composing the Art of the Fugue then Mental Healthopathy therapy is positively indicated Either in group session or private analysis and I thank you thank you thank you

Sergei Packard was one of the first to gallop backstage And again smiling fondly he lisped that annoying cryptic word to Spartan as he wrung his hand

Rumpelstiltskin Doctor!

What? Dr McClintock said but then he had to turn to the others who were crowding around him and said little else but Thank you Yes I—— Why thank you for quite a number of minutes

Well now I have to take issue with what you said about Jesus! the Reverend Willis Oates boomed

Ah but faith is an active tenet of Mental Healthopathy Dr Mc Clintock smiled And the most severe test of human faith is the ul timate spiritual conviction of the truth of an illusion that the intellect knows is a falsehood Now pick yourself up off the floor Oates his mind said coldly

And Ives Stanhope and the Reverend Oates and a gentleman named Knox K Knox all murmured Why we always thought that too Only we didn t say it in quite the same way

Mrs Sixe was holding a reception for Dr McClintock in her Brent wood home and the downstairs reserved section of the audience all duly prepared to hasten there All with the exception of Mrs Tony Ferrar who snapped in Dr McClintock s hearing that the entire evening had been a "dirge as far as she was concerned and she wanted to go home and listen to her new Wanda Landowska records

Dr McClintock merely took her hand familiarly and said in a paternal voice And Mrs Ferrar! How s the concerto coming?

In a state of kinetic imbalance Isolde said Now where did Tony slip to? Her gaze penetrated and came out on the dorsal side of a handsome young woman who had captured Tony and was say ing I never did congratulate you on your marriage doll Look why don t you two come on out to the reception with Spart and me?

A sextette of *mavericks herding to one side and consisting of the* Quarleses the Salpingers and the Stanleys spoke urgently to one an other but what they said Dr McClintock could not hear They seemed to be trying to persuade Milt of something while Nancy *nodded her head eagerly At last Milt shrugged in defeat and they* moved away

Joni approached still clinging to the captive Tony Ready dear? The Ferrars are going with us And Dr Bootmaker has already taken Professor Kidd and Dr Higbee and the rest Oh good evening Mrs Ferrar!

Good evening Mrs McClintock Isolde said with bland mal ice She flinched almost imperceptibly when Dr McClintock grabbed her arm and swung her towards the steps crying heartily Well are we all ready? And then adding in a low voice smiling the while Boots you dear ratty little bitch! Let s go to your place so I can take your precious album of Wanda Landowska and break it over your head How was I tonight?"

She replied in her too well tempered jangle Profound Spartan utterly profound Wipe the egg off your waistcoat

It so happens that I believe in what I said tonight "

I know you do she said bored That s what appalls me

He finally discovered Milt standing in the bathtub dourly examin ing the fish swimming behind the walls in one of Mrs Sixe s six bath rooms Milt! Where the hell you been all evening?

Milt sighed and tapped on the glass to attract an angel fish Go wipe the egg off your waistcoat he said

Glowering Spartan slammed th loor to That was cute when Isolde said it Repetitious when Quent came out with it, and a damn bore when you can t think of anything else to say

Look Spart What are you going to do when a patient who s really mentally disturbed comes to you—send him out to a reputable psy chiatrist?

Certainly If the patient is psychotic

I don t mean the psychotic patient only I m including the ones who are seriously ill emotionally the dangerously neurotic

Spartan stubbornly pretended to misunderstand Naturally I d advise those with criminal tendencies to seek the services of——

You know what I mean Spart! Stop avoiding the issue—wh it s the matter with you? I m asking you simply this Are you actually going to keep handing out this hogwash of yours about being one s sweet selfish confused resentful self to every miserable neurotic who comes your way—or not?

Hogwash? Spartan said coldly Hogwash to encourage some one who s a little sharper than the rest of the nincompoops to take advantage of them? Hogwash to free some cringing unhappy deviate of his terror of the opinions of the self righteous heteros? And you know as well as I do that the heteros who make the most noise about the homos are those who have strong latent homo tendencies them sel——

You re drunk Milt said sadly He and the angel fish exchanged a long searching look And it s still hogwash

That s your opinion Milt by any chance have you ever met a one hundred per cent psychoanalyzed product? If you have you know that he s a grinning tail wagging yes man with about as much drive as a broken down Stanley Steamer! By God you re damn right I m not going to turn out a bunch of mental eunuchs that——

In brief Milt interjected 'you believe wholly in your Mental Healthopathy

They were facing each other now and the light coming through the fish tank cast a green shine on Milt s tired face Spartan said slowly I ve always believed in what I said tonight Milt Always the only time I sacrificed myself for someone else—look what it got me

You think that s what you did? They gazed at each other deeply as though they had not seen or heard of the other for years and had stumbled across one another where their opposing paths suddenly happened to cross

It sounds silly for one man to say he loves another man Spart. But as friends I think we do So I think I have a right to say this to you even when we were at our most immature I always felt there was something pathological about you And now I m afraid it s long since become chronic

What has become chronic? Spartan demanded but trying to sound indifferent rather than truculent

"Honestly Fartin don t you know?

Confronted suddenly with the door ajar the door he had always kept barred and cobwebbed he felt an inward tremor that threatened a vast destructive tumbling He broke the silence first with a nervous giggle Oh rubbish! What are we bickering about anyway? Let s have a drink man I m dry!

BOOK V

Prognosis

HE WAS exhausted and yet restless He felt the way others must have felt when the war ended It had been too big a day he had talked too much laughed too much been too excited experienced too many emotions and now he trembled inside as though he still had it all to face yet There was nothing he could do to release the pressure and none of the things he thought of doing appealed to him Outside the window lay his pool inviting in the warm summer night inside lay Joni on the couch also inviting and in the hunting lodge bar were bottles and bottles But he was already drunk he had been it suddenly seemed now for the last three or four years continuously since that night he and Milt had parted at Mrs Sixe s soiree

He uncapped a bottle of beer and carried it about the room with him untasted I think it went off pretty well don t you Joni?"

She lowered her book and said obediently Darling the opening was colossal Then putting the book in her lap she licked her thumb and stamped it into the palm of the other hand Reassurance number one hundred and six Spart will you kindly light somewhere? And if you don t want that beer give it to me

"Was it all right to have Pops Chaparral play his guitar? I m not speaking from an artistic view understand but a—uh—practical one

'They loved it You were wonderful The Hollywood Juveniles for Jesus Quintette sang like birds and the Reverend Oates was noisier than usual Anything else you d like me to repeat while I m at it?

He paused at the window looking out at the city below Twin searchlights arched the sky crossed melted into the horizon and arose again to meet I keep looking at the lights Joni You know what we ought to do? We ought to go and rent a plane somewhere and then fly over the building and look down on it I wonder what

it would be like to be looking down into searchlights and know that you put them there Joni! Do you think we could find——

She sat up her book tumbling to the floor You re crazy I don t want to go for a plane ride tonight and neither do you You hate flying anyway so what s the point?

He tasted his beer and put it down All that damn champagne made me queasy You really want this beer?

No but I want you to come here and relax Her voice was tender as she reached for his hand to pull him down beside her Want me to rub your head?

He sighed and let himself sag down against her How did you know it ached?

It makes mine ache to look at you Her fingertips pressed hard against his forehead before moving in slow circles past the hairline over the crown and down to the taut muscles of the neck And it is a beautiful building she said softly and the ceremonies were very impressive It went off even better than we hoped it would

This lying inert as a sack was not what he wanted after all he discovered and he sat up Let s go for a drive he said and Joni sighed and arose In all things reasonable he had come to expect implicit unquestioning obedience

And if I d married her he thought, watching her leave the room to comb her hair she d have been ordering me about long ago Or trying to which is even worse in a woman Or maybe worst of all simply overlooking me as Boots does Tony

In the car she was silent only her hand clenched on the door handle a mute complaint that he was taking the curves down the hill too fast But the Cad had a low center of gravity and only swayed easily back onto the road when once they came too near the outside edge Going down Franklin he said as casually as though he had not begun with this destination in mind Why don t we barge in on Milt?

We ought to call first Joni said

Hell Milt won t mind Refusing to be reminded of the coolness that had sprung up between Milt and himself those months of silence broken only by a phone call or two he demanded too loudly Why should he mind?

Joni shrugged and stared through the windshield ' No reason at all Except that it s after eleven Spart

The lower part of the house was dark when they drew up before

it. And not waiting for Joni to protest further Spartan got out and came around to her door Well are you coming or not?"

"Be it on your head " she said and climbed out.

A yawning Milt in an old dressing gown and slippers opened the door and mumbled "What is it?" before he recognized Spartan He snapped awake and cried "Well welcome strangers! Come in come in! Hey Nancy——"

"Come on out for a ride with us Spartan said

Milt pulled them inside "Ride? You re crazy man He peered through the narrow windows on either side of the door "New Cad huh?

"A couple of months Spartan said deprecatingly "That isn t what I want you to see I opened my new Healthopathy Center today"

"Oh sure! I drove past the place a time or two recently but it was all boarded up around the front. So you had your opening today"

There seemed nothing more for anyone to say

With his eyes Spartan pleaded with Joni to extricate him from his embarrassment as they followed Milt to the den The three of them sat rather stiffly smiling at each other

Nancy s probably putting on a robe or something Milt said finally

Why don t you kick us out if you were going to bed" Joni said defiantly almost to Spartan rather than Milt. I can take Rover Boy here to a bar or something

How's Ted?" Spartan interjected loudly

"Cramming" Milt said He s got a final in organic chemistry tomorrow afternoon He ll want to see you—I ll go yell for him"

When they were alone Joni said "Now see what you went and did? Drag Milt out of bed and now you re going to cause Ted to flunk out of college Let s leave these nice people alone Spart We can call them soon and make a definite date If they want to that —— She quieted as Milt returned

"He s got a pal spending the night with him Milt said Kid named Mark Cameron, a pre med too We call him Burning Brand behind his back"

Mark Cameron Spartan said selecting a suitably inane smile to accompany the remark. "There s a good ole Southern Name

We re great I dropped in on the off chance that the Salpingers would want to go see my new building tonight With the searchlights out front. Where s Wendy—let s the whole family go

New building? Mark said respectfully You ve built your own building Doctor?

'The Healthopathy Center Joni said And it s a honey ' And to help Spartan she added artfully Come on everybody let s go look at it It ll never be as new again

The Healthopathy Center" Mark said evenly Then you re the Doctor McClintock who—— My aunt went to you once and you gave her some pills There was nothing wrong with her of course Now she s going to another quack named Preebles Only his eyes denied the casual tone in which the insult was couched

Goddammit you look——" Milt began at the same time Ted was starting Listen you shut—— and Nancy was announcing in a startled voice Why Mark Cameron——

And Joni was beginning with a thoughtful chuckle Well I see what you mean Milt

And Spartan was rigid with anger and utterly silent.

Excuse me Doctor Mark said not to Spartan but to Milt. I'm terribly sorry

"Suppose you and Ted get the hell upstairs Milt said angrily And you can cool your hot head under a faucet for a while Mark Cameron I m not demanding an apology for the simple reason that Doctor McClintock is above requiring one from *you*

Spart I m sorry as hell Milt began as soon as the boys were gone

Oh forget it Spartan said magnanimously and then spoiled his effect by adding I can t be bothered with every little snot who tries to insult me If he wants to act like poor white trash that s his worry not mine

Oh for Pete s sake Joni said Besides I ve seen you let rip with a few insults in your time too I like the kid!

I m sorry it happened Milt repeated Mark is a bit fresh That aunt he mentioned more or less raised him but she didn t manage to knock off any of the corners He s belligerent because he s been on his own too much"

Spartan said proudly Milt will you stop beating your breast and shut up? If I didn t know I was a quack by now it would be time

somebody told me What s the name of this aunt of his? he concluded less rigidly

"It s Cameron too His father's sister She s really a nut Spart Mark talked her into coming to me for a varicosed leg and if you think you were insulted' Five minutes after she got in my office she was informing me I was a butcher and sneering every time she said the word doctor Then she walked out I never saw her again

'Nice family Spartan said I m happy to say I don t remember her

Are we going to see that building or not? Nancy cried tactfully

Yet admitting to himself with a certain nobility of manner that he was a quack was not quite the same as having an arrogant brat like Mark Cameron remind him of the fact Inside he was still angry only half hearing the Salpingers cries of admiration when he parked between the searchlights The Healthopathy Center was of functional design, with much glass and marble and with an entrance or lobby like a truncated isosceles triangle with glass doors at the narrow end In the ceiling were lights like moons flat with their surroundings and on each of the doors was a large scrolled golden *H* It was a good building and even Hoary had approved the plans saying Well for once you re buying something that s in good taste "

He had come a long way from the bamboo bar in the Hollywood apartment

"Want to see the inside?

'You bet! the Salpingers chorused

He showed them the offices the treatment rooms the session lounges the X ray room the long glass walled lab and finally he took them through the lecture rooms and labs in the back which housed the College of Healthopathy

My God Milt breathed "It s so gorgeous I don t know whether to be awestruck or contemptuous

I m contemptuous Nancy said "I like sour grapes so much I eat them by the handful Where s the champagne fountain? She opened the doors to several dark rooms and groped about I know damn well you mu t have one somewhere she muttered

'The joint was awash in the stuff this afternoon Joni said

Almost withdrawn from them Spartan stood looking down at the gold key in his hand His thumb traced the raised *H* and suddenly he

saw the scrubbed walls of the infirmary the cots in the ward and the new refrigerator as it had looked that first day when it was de livered

That refrigerator had been so beautiful'

Oh God he thought appalled was that the high point of my life? And now again he was seeing young Mark Cameron feeling that poking regret that stirred old dust-covered layers in his memory Little snot he thought fresh little snot

So this Milt was saying is the house that guilt built?

You re damn right it took gilt Joni said

And Spartan murmured What?

Guilt Milt said in his habitual jocular tone when needling Spartan Don t you tell your patients that their neuroses are merely an expression of the guilt they feel because they re more richly en dowed mentally than the rest of us chuckleheads? Or did I mishear you that time?

Well I hope Spartan feels guilty Nancy said I hope he never sleeps again Imagine building a place like this and no champagne fountain'

We only use it to flush out the urinals Joni said Isolde Ferrar would think using it anywhere else too too vulgah

Good Lord haven t you shot her yet? Nancy inquired politely

Yet they were not impressed in the way he had wanted They expressed rather the same disinterested awe that he had exhibited as a young bumpkin fresh from Dublin entering the Rialto Theater in Tenneville for the first time It was opulence he had had no de sire to own he had known instinctively that the Rialto was a spurious display that under the soft rugs were rough floors and that the satin falls were not satin at all but some cheap material treated to simulate a more than real gloss

But his Healthopathy Center was genuine Under the wall to-wall carpeting were excellent hardwood floors the drapes (which his young architect had gently reminded him were not to be called drapes) were hand blocked linens from New Mexico Those in his office were off white shot with gold and printed with the golden *H* The building itself was much sturdier than the Code required for earthquake resistance even its design was a deliberate enclosure rather than a shutting out of air sky and space

The Salpingers hurt him with their flippancy and it did not par

ticularly ease him to realize that they were totally unaware that they were being anything but highly commendatory flatteringly envious

As they left going through the glass doors Joni remarked You could hit those doors with a sledge hammer and they wouldn t break. But one slight tap in the wrong place or a scratch with a diamond ring—and whoof—they fall into a pile of powder Isn t that marvelous? They re super-cooled or something she went on pleased with her show of knowledge And some night when I have nothing else to do I m going to get drunk and think about them I m sure *there s a moral in them somewhere*

Why don t you Spartan asked her silently just shut up? Joni with her devotion her imitation of Nancy s off hand domesticity her refusal to act like his whore instead becoming increasingly in the eyes of all his wife he found occasionally tiresome This was one of the occasions

He did not want Joni to come back to the house with him and he dropped her off at the apartment Then alone with only his housekeeper snoring lightly off in her quarters he stood at his glass wall window and watched the searchlights rise and cross in the sky

He had to take a barbiturate again before he could go to sleep

One of the first things he did in his new office was to look up Mark Cameron s aunt in the records In the back of the building a class was gathering awaiting his arrival but he lingered over the files This morning he was to lecture on Healthopathic Nondirective Counseling (a system of psychotherapy wherein the therapist merely sat and listened while the patient presumably free associated with all the abandon of a garrulous drunk) before his first patient was brought to him at nine thirty At four he was to lecture again in Physiology and Healthopathic Pharmacodynamics and after that a group would be waiting around the pool at his house for him when he drove up He had over fifty students in his college and a faculty of seven of whom some were staff members at the Sanitarium and others local Healthopathists who had been chosen because they had attended some recognized liberal arts college before becoming drugless practitioners It was also the duty of this staff to grade the papers sent in by the Correspondence School of Healthopathy students

Though no sound carried from the back of the Center he knew that his class had arrived in toto by now He found three Camerons

one a married woman one a male one a spinster In his own hand writing of almost three years before he had done the first history on her She was in her early fifties unemployed had had the usual child hood diseases and in her middle twenties had suffered severely with dysmenorrhea this was probably (as he had noted down in a short hand devised by himself) of psychosomatic origin and had finally righted itself automatically although Miss Cameron had declared that the Kneipp Water Cure had remedied the condition in a week s time Her Kineticodiagnosis revealed a slight anemia heart and lungs were sound she was slightly underweight and had a varicosed con dition in the left leg At the time he had been doing less and less in the way of Healthopathy alone and had referred her to an M D , closing her file A week later she was back this time Hoary treated her duly noting down the meaningless jargon about Kinetabs and a scrawl to the effect of elastic stockings The file went on and on after that Kinetabs 7 11 102 27 49 193 two more Kineticodiagnoses and finally a three-day stay in the San

While young Mark Cameron struggled to earn his education his only living relative had been squandering hundreds and hundreds of dollars on Healthopathy Spartan scowled If Miss Cameron were un employed then whatever funds she had had been inherited from a grandparent of Mark s or were perhaps part of an inheritance of Mark s own

Yet it was impossible for him to remember the woman at all He resolved to check with Hoary even if she was Preebles s patient now

It took Mark Cameron until almost five that afternoon to call him And though Spartan was neither gruff nor biting Mark found his apology a difficult thing to utter

one of Doctor Salpinger s best friends and he s been swell to me sir So I was way off base even on that score alone But uh so after we went back upstairs last night Ted told me off but good and I certainly deserved it sir I mean I understand more clearly Doct—uh—Doctor McClintock I m terribly sorry I was so rude to you last night and I hope you ll forgive me '

Forget it Spartan said enjoying his superior kindliness his Christian qualities

Mark seemed inclined to linger as though determined to punish himself further by prolonging his embarrassment Well I d like to but you can t make a fool of yourself the way I did It s awfully

kind of you sir to take it this way to talk to   I just want you to know I d never have made a crack like that if   His voice died away and Spartan heard a muffled clearing of the throat

Suppose you come up to the house Sunday with the Salpingers" the wonderfully understanding Dr McClintock said We re going to have a swim and then eat out by the pool

Young Cameron was appalled at such generosity But he managed to convey to Spartan that he would be delighted to come

And thus Spartan had acquired himself a protegé—the fresh snot who had inherited the future Spartan himself should have had At the moment though Spartan would have denied heatedly that he had any *intention of offering Mark Cameron a job Any job as long as* it took little of the boy s time from his studies during the school months and paid well

Under the tutelage of Phoebe Kidd head of the Kinetab Labs sales force and Lecturing Representative Mark Cameron was indoctrinated into the precepts of vitamin salesmanship and sent on the road that summer In a company car on a generous expense account and with a salary of five hundred dollars a month plus commissions (although Kinetabs sold themselves) he would do much better than he had on a fishing boat His freshman year in med school was as certain to occur as though it had happened already

Dr Stanley duly reported in that he thought Mark Cameron a sharp kid all right. I wonder why I keep wanting to bash his head in

What? Spartan said over the phone Cameron s?

He s got Phoebe eating out of his hand and poor Charlie cowed completely

What s wrong with that?

Nothing Except that when he met my wife he said he loved Siamese cats And she invited him out to the house the other night and he drank up all my beer Not only that he made such a fuss over the goddamn cat that it up and bit me

Glad to hear he s fitting in well Spartan said blandly Then in a more guarded tone he added I m—uh—rather interested in the kid I want to see him get his medical education These days medicine is almost a rich man s son s avocation"

M

There was a crunching sound in his ear, and he held the phone away from his ear What s that noise?

'Licorice flavored calcium tablets Dr Stanley munched We re trying them out Well that s my monthly report Only next time you send out a budding Lister to me, *make sure he hates cats!*

In a magnanimous glow Spartan had his next patient sent in. Fingertips together he settled back to listen to the following

I guess I knew it all along but I didn t want to admit it You know what I mean—I kept telling myself that I needed a drink to let down after a day s work at the studio

Speaking of drinks Spartan thought, I could use one right now

one drink led to another But what was really troubling me wasn t my work—I was getting better parts all the time—parts really worthy of me you know what I mean guilty and that s the whole truth jealous of me could I do about it? You know what I mean? But it got me after a while they were almost *afraid* I d make the grade occur to them would it, that I had talent and they didn t what I mean? My mother could have been a Broadway star herself if she hadn t my old man and his lousy shoestore Me! Can you feature it? Me wasting my talent working in a lousy started getting into fights at bars anyway the studio threatened to suspend me so I said I'd get myself psyched But so far all I ve listened to is a lot of insulting malarky—except when I started M H of course realize that the artistic psyche is more involved know what I mean? But I m very hopeful this time considering only my third session

Why Spartan asked himself irritably does this chucklehead have to blow bubbles at the corners of his mouth when he talks?

taking some T V roles as I feel there s a world of growth to be done in a new media like that and I can expand my

Medium goddammit Spartan yelled at him silently

II

And thus the summer went and he found himself returning often to thoughts of Mark Cameron

It came to him one night as he lay sleepless and half-drunk that slowly over the months and years he was beginning to grow fright

en-d but why or of what he could not perceive Too often he was still awake at dawn and arose wearily to discover that in his mind it was still night.

After a we-k of dominating a convention of drugless practitioners in Washington h- flew back to find Ives and Joni waiting for him at the airport. They splashed through the wet winter dusk to the car and Spartan leaned back on the seat exhausted and content to let Joni drive

"Well how was Washington?" Ives asked brightly

Spartan looked out at the rain glumly He was so tired these days not from overwork, nor even from a prodigal spending of his nervous energies He was simply tired "How would I know? he said flatly "All I did was listen to a bunch of Blabbermouths for four solid days"

There was an embarrassed silence

" sorry Ives" Spartan began but Stanhope made his gesture imitative of Spartan s to clear away the superfluous apology

"What you need" Joni said "is a hot bath a hot dinner and a hot toddy"

Sometime in the past she would have added "and a hot piece" and Ives would have sniggered in appreciation Now having stated her thoughts without embellishing them in order to attract attention she had nothing more to say and concentrated on her driving.

When did she change he asked himself and then suddenly began wondering with a dull pain if she still loved him He had taken her adoration for granted for so long. She must have felt his gaze for she turned away from her driving an instant to return his glance She said smiling You sound like an old lion sighing that way"

It was in her eyes that she still loved him but the almost gasping admiration she had once held for him was now a mere shadow of regret.

They invited Ives to stay for dinner with them He refused thoughtfully seemingly still occupied with the strangeness of Spartan s behavior "I'm due at a meeting soon he excused himself "Joni why don t you just drop me at the corner and I'll grab a taxi"

After Stanhope had disappeared into the rain Joni shook her head and pursed her mouth "Poor Ives! He s hardly shrimp-colored any more but he s afraid to quit."

There was a crunching sound in his ear, and he held the phone away from his ear What s that noise?

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ii

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It came to him one night as he lay sleepless and half-drunk that slowly over the months and years he was beginning to grow fright

anything but almost worse—— He looked at Spartan a bit wild about the eyes Doctor don t you know he s crazy?

Bootmaker?

Bootmaker He s crazy or obsessed or something"

'Now look Spartan began soothingly I can see you re very upset about all this But you re beginning to rave a little yourself Suppose you tell me how this started Has Boots told you she wants a divorce?

She had her old man do it Bootmaker told me this morning out at the San He said she was taking a plane to New York and would come home either by way of Florida or Nevada He wouldn t say in which state she was going to divorce me He just said that she had thought it over and that the best way would be for her just to leave And I could be gone from the house before she got back So simple isn t it? Your wife simply takes a plane and

Spartan closed the curtains and turned on the lights He saw then that Tony was crying You re better off he said in the voice he used to distraught patients I m sorry to have to say it but you are"

No I m still in love with her That s my trouble I m still in love with her

Why? Spartan asked bluntly

Tony looked at him searchingly through his tears Suppose you tell me why you re in love with her Do you know?

This thing is making you a bit paranoid Spartan said withdrawing hastily

You re in love with her Tony repeated You have been for years She gets you the way she does me I don t even know what it is It isn t just sex—I couldn t do the things I ve done to myself for her just for sex I couldn t put up with that terrible father of hers just for that I couldn t know what he s up to all day and then go home with him at night and watch him across the table—just because I liked to sleep with Isolde

"Wait a moment Spartan said Say that again That about what he does all day"

Tony looked away I m sorry that just slipped out I didn t mean to insult you sir

What is he up to all day? Spartan demanded

Nothing Healthopathy He and Preebles and Higbee and their

double talk and their oily smiles And that bastard Cramer It s different here at the Center Doctor McClintock—I think you re sincere in what you re trying to do *That s all I meant He attempted* to laugh and sobbed painfully instead I m drunk I guess you know I ve been wandering around the airports and drinking all day

'Tony—tell me something Why did you ever come to work for me?

I don t know I just—— He sniffled and pulled out his handkerchief I d just gotten out of the hospital—I d had another foot operation about then—and *I didn t feel like going back to college* I d used up all my money getting my Master s oh hell Doctor McClintock I wanted to make some good money I d heard you talk the first time about Healthopathy and I knew you were someone *on the way up I figured I could climb on the bandwagon too" He* blew his nose reflectively I m not the type after all am I?

Spartan smiled Hardly Tony Look why don t you go back to school? Get yourself a Ph D in biochem—be something decent for a change You ve got the money now to do it haven t you?

I have that at least, Tony said miserably

"I m going to tell you something I ve never told anyone else" *Spartan said wondering why he was revealing himself to this pathetic* man with the plucked patch in his yellow hair Right after Healthopathy started rolling as soon as I had cleared five thousand dollars I wrote to almost every medical school in the country I pleaded for admission Only one of them was even polite enough to regret that it couldn t take me And if that one had I d have dropped Healthopathy and all the money I knew it was going to make in a flash *But there was something I had done once that made me un*suitable in the eyes of every school I applied to You see Tony I have to be a quack I have no choice You do"

"You re not a quack now Tony said uncertainly

"Yes Spartan said He was so tired these days sometimes it was an effort even to talk it seemed 'Yes I m still one For a while I tried to fool myself about Mental Healthopathy M H—that art of hothouse culture of neurotic drives I guess I succeeded for a while But I m still a quack—I ll always be He made his gesture of brushing aside tactful returns silencing Tony Go on get out of it while you can Tony Losing *Isolde* was the bes thing that could *have happened to you" He turned his back on Tony and stared at*

his curtains printed over and over with a golden *H* I'd leave this town if I were you And Tony——

Yes sir?"

"Let me know how you come out Spartan said Drop me a line when you re settled back in school I think I d like to hear about it.

I will Tony said And tell Joni good by for me will you Doc? Even though I never saw too much of her I always considered her a friend of mine He cleared his throat 'The way I have always considered you one too" He stood up cleared his throat again awk wardly and came around the desk to shake hands with Spartan Well—good by Doctor

"Good luck" Spartan said Good luck George S Ferrar"

Tony favored him with a shaky grin That G Singleton business was pretty hammy wasn t it?

When the door closed behind Tony Spartan turned off the lights pulled the curtains open and sat staring down at the street below The closing hour rush was on and he watched as thousands of ordinary citizens drove patiently towards their homes their families those ties for which they were living their drab lives

He wondered briefly when Isolde would be back And then he thought of what Tony had said But he was not in love with Isolde now perhaps he never had been Like Tony he knew only that he was compelled sometimes to be near her It wasn t sex it wasn t love It seemed as though Isolde was his particular fantasy one which he pursued as diligently as Isolde did her music Except he said silently I don t pursue her any more I just want her now and again maybe I'm beginning to realize that she really doesn t exist

Isolde flew home again in a little over six weeks But for his name which she retained for business reasons she might never have known a G Singleton Ferrar Unexpectedly she was ushered into Spartan s office just before noon one morning and took the very same chair Tony had crouched in while chronicling his woes

Well well, well look who s here! Spartan heard himself bray and to remedy this he added tartly I m honored Mrs Ferrar What can I do for you?

She was looking prettier than she had in months—the muscles about her mouth relaxed her eyes less distant and evasive "It s not Mrs Ferrar now Spart. Although I'm actually keeping the name

and calling myself Miss Isolde Ferrar looked better on programs and —record albums than Isolde Bootmaker

He lit her cigarette recognizing as he bent to her that she wore the same perfume that Joni did and grinning because he knew it would annoy her to learn of it Record albums Boots?

That s what I went to New York for I recorded the Saint Saens Concerto The orchestra came out quite well, even if it was just a radio orchestra

"The G Minor? Spartan asked famous because of his being able to remember the concerto And when she nodded he said I thought it took six weeks to get a divorce

It does I merely registered at a dude ranch, flew on to New York and came back in time to get my divorce That s the way everybody *does* it

Congratulations anyway Boots on your album I ll want an autographed copy complete with appropriate sentiments Say something like—oh— 'To Spartan without whose unflagging en cour——

It wasn t your encouragement that was unflagging Isolde said snippily Spart do you *know* where Dad is? He didn t meet me at the airport and I called the San and the house and here and he wasn t anywhere So I taxied over here anyway

He knew you were coming?

Isolde did not bother to answer He ll turn up I might as well go home

Oh don t do that! Have *lunch* with me Boots We ll find Hoary sooner or later Oh—I know what happened—where did you come in?

Burbank

Spartan laughed Hoary s probably raising *hell* about you out at International I ll call and check on it

And now by some fortune whether ill or good he could not decide he was driving down Wilshire with Isolde at his side She talked about New York she talked about her music she talked about her harpsichord—an instrument which had white keys where the black ones should have been and vice versa and which annoyed him with its *jangling* plunking tone—and she did *not* mention Tony once

Spartan did Would you like to know where *Tony* is?

Not particularly she said lighting another cigarette

"You smoke too much You re too thin these days He s up at Berkeley working on a Ph D Best thing in the world for him

Isolde looked bored You mean I wasn t

He said curiously looking at her covertly while ostensibly attending to his driving Why did you ever marry that poor guy in the first place?

I ve forgotten Isolde said If I ever had a reason Where are you taking me?

A place people go to

She threw him a grin Instead of celebrities you mean How will your press agent ever find you there?

'Tell me he said what are your plans now?

Plans? Why just what I ve been doing Studying and playing

You re in a rut honey Why don t you go to Europe or something? Get out on your own for a while They ve got concert halls over there and piano teachers too for that matter My God Boots you re pushing thirty——"

I am *not* pushing thirty as you say! She searched angrily for another cigarette in her bag

Well if being twenty nine years old isn t pushing——"

You re presumptuous Spartan McClintock You always were And one of your favorite poses is that of the Almighty Oracle You tell everyone what to do how to do it and when you expect it to be done I m not your daughter——

I d have been a precocious little bastard if you were

" nor am I that Joni person of yours Furthermore I m quite aware that *if Tony is back in school it s because the great McClintock* most kindly suggested he go there

I told him to go back East I believe Spartan said blandly

But I dear Doctor McClintock am quite capable of running my life without any—— She broke off abruptly and said childishly I don t want to go to that restaurant Take me someplace else

What s the matter afraid *your* press agent won t find you?"

I don t need——

And as for running your life I d like to see you try it some time What are you going to do when you wake up some morning and you re forty years old and your father isn t there any more?

I ll either commit suicide or marry you Isolde said So my future is perfectly taken care of

Not with that damn tinkling harpsichord you won t

You ll take the harpsichord and like it

He laughed All right Boots we ll put it in a room with Joni and let them fight it out

They went to the restaurant he had originally chosen and quibbled good naturedly throughout the meal To irritate her he hummed through his nose and told her the melody was one she played

I can t say I recognize it she said coldly You ve got me con fused with that man who plays the guitar

Pops Chaparral? Boots I don t think you look a thing like him Besides he s pushing seventy and you re only pushing——

Stop saying that' she said through her teeth And I don t mean that appalling Pops Chaparral Imagine having a lustful old goat like that on T V playing hymns and howling——

'You watch him a lot? He grinned nastily

I won t even have a set in the house

Really? I bought one for the bar last week

Naturally You would I suppose Miss Jolyon s entire living-room wall is one huge ninety five inch screen?

Ninety six

He hummed the melody over and over while she ate his dessert

In the parking lot he kissed her quite circumspectly and then drove her home

When he got back to his office he found Sergei Packard lying on the couch reading an old copy of *Medical Magician* Waving aside Spartan s apologies he lisped Those were the days It did me a lot more good to read this thing again than just talking about myself for an hour would have yes those were the days Doc

They grinned at each other

Damn right they were Spartan said How about a drink Ser gei?

iv

He had at first been worried when the legal existence of the drug less practitioner had been abolished at least as far as the licensing

of new practitioners was concerned For this meant that though he and the Boys could continue in their activities none of the bright young quacks graduating from the College of Healthopathy and similar higher institutions of learning could obtain licenses—unless they could also pass the chiropractors exam

He had been most worried until Quent had suggested reasonably that Spartan finance a Healthopathic lobby dedicated to the holy cause of bringing about the enactment of a Healthopathist Enabling Act Then putting the matter in Quent s capable hands he worried no longer

In consequence he found himself frequently at Quent s house merely drinking and chatting at first, and later learning to play Quent s beloved game of chess

This night Joni and Mrs Quarles were off to a movie while Spartan and Quent bent over the board Quent brought his knight into position to threaten Spartan s queen and Spartan frowned and fingered a pawn

Don t be a chump Quent said sharply If you can t keep your mind on the game just tell me Look at your queen over there!

I m sorry I guess my mind is all unbuttoned " Spartan mumbled and then fingered the pawn again

Well don t be so rueful about it—we don t have to finish this you know

Oh I ll——

Quent swept the chessmen off the board and into the box No use badgering you with chess problems—you ve evidently got enough on your mind

Spartan sank back in his chair and closed his eyes That s the funny part of it I don t have anything on my mind The Center s running smoothly and as you say it takes time to get any legislative bill through so there s no use worrying around about that now

I don t know what it is Quent All I have to do all day long is listen to a bunch of neurotics borass at me teach a class or two and that s it. The San is pretty strictly Hoary s and I don t go out there in a month of Sundays

Quent said studiedly Spart you know what? You ought to retire!

Retire! Quent I m forty five—what would I do with the rest of my life?

Quent shrugged Spend your dough At least take off a month or so to count it No seriously—why don t you sell out and quit? Take Joni to Europe or something?

Spartan set his jaw suddenly No I can t I can t explain it but I don t know I somehow have the feeling that I m the only thing that s keeping the lid clamped on Or maybe I mean keeping the Healthopathic Boys from running amuck Nope, Quent I don t need less work these days I need more I ought to start some thing new crank out something that will create a stir

Uh Quent said doubtfully Only trouble with that is you re no longer a fad You re an institution and institutions are supposed to be staid

Oh that s rot! I can do anything with Healthopathy I choose

Quent peered into the bottom of his drink as though searching for vermin I m afraid you re wrong there pal You forget you re no longer the only Healthopathist in this country There are a couple in practically every large city all sitting around mouthing about the gu reat Doctor McClintock Our Revered Founder and cleaning up on fees You go off half-cocked on some new idea and leave them behind and there ll be a howl and a squawk from here all the way to New York And after you grind out another graduating class or two at the Center you won t even be real any more You ll be a legend And legends are inactive—they don t exist except in some body s mind No—the thing for you is to retire And for God s sake do me a favor and stop going around with that scowl on your pan!

Oh pardon me! Spartan snapped and then added rather shame facedly Maybe I do need a vacation after all Getting peckish

Sure go to——

I don t want to do that Living on trains and boats fooling with customs sleeping in one lousy hotel after another and eating food I know was cooked by some sloven in a dirty kitchen—no thanks! Ives Stanhope told me all about his glorious stay in Europe

Oh well that moron He went over to some kind of Commie Congress didn t he? You can imagine the hotels the comrades stayed in Quent sniggered I still wonder if it wasn t the shock of finding that as a comrade he d have to live as a peasant over there that cooled him off on the Great Experiment after all Anyway—we re straying from the subject We were discussing a vacation for you

"I know" Spartan said "and I just thought of the one I m going to take"

Oh?

"I'll think about it a while and then tell you"

He had thought he would simply get in the car and drive his destination any place that was not the Fabulous Land of Blabbermouthry or one of its colonies Cities were thus eliminated as well as resorts and cruises Then he remembered that Mark Cameron was to begin his summer's stint on the road Diffidently almost experimentally he said to Joni "You know I m thinking of going along with Cameron for a couple of weeks Just drop in on some of my *Kinetabs* customers create a little good will.

Surely you can think of a better excuse than that Joni said Why don t you adopt Mark or something if you like him that much?

He squirmed Now that doesn t make——

"Yes it does Milt s all in a froth about Ted s starting med school and you want to play the game too Maybe it s transference maybe it s just a way of renewing your youth maybe it s identification but every time Milt says Ted these days you say Mark Cameron " She smiled and ran a hand down his cheek And I m all for it! Mark s a nice kid he'll make a fine doctor and I think its sweet of you to put him through

Why he earns every——

Malarky That s just a polite little fiction of yours But I can see why our wild-eyed Mark arouses your maternal instinct—he positively fires mine I'll bet Milt s right—he s just the way you used to be

He said, I had one other idea for a vacation Only I d go with you To hide his embarrassment he laughed tentatively and said 'They call it a honeymoon or something nauseating like that

No darling Joni said A wistful expression of regret appeared on her mouth momentarily When I marry I want to marry—— Spart we went into that once But I want children——

Are you telling me I m sterile?

Now relax! I'm simply telling you that you can t send a six months-old baby to med school. And if I got pregnant tomorrow you d be sixty-six years old before you d get any fun out of our children at all"

I ought to kick you out," he said feelingly Lock up this apart ment and kick you right out on your ass Then maybe you d have a chance to find that husband and those kids before it s too late

Would you please do that for me Spart? She laid her cheek on his

No I happen to want you around I love you

You d better go on that vacation Joni said Your mind is beginning to go under the strain Suddenly she pressed her face in his neck fiercely and sniffled You no-good stinker! Do you realize that's the first time you ve ever said you loved me? You d *better* go on a vacation with Mark.'

When Milt heard of Spartan s plan for a trip he had difficulty in controlling his mocking smile 'That s strange ' he said innocently I mean because I ve been thinking I d knock off for a week and take the boys up north fishing somewhere Just before school opens I—uh—wondered if you mightn t like to go along

Well this is a business trip you understand Spartan said

Oh, of course! But in that case you ll be able to take a real va cation later on

Phoebe Kidd shrilled with delight at the idea Holding the phone a considerable distance from his ear Spartan listened to her cries It s a truly marvelous idea truly marvelous! Doctor Spartan our customers will be charmed to meet you And I can arrange for at least six lectures——

'The hell you say! He went on to elucidate fully that he would not lecture that was her field that he was planning this only as a mere survey to see how Kinetabs were doing in the West that he relied utterly on her abilities as lecturer to inform the people of the efficacy of supplementing their diets with his vitamins amino acids enzymes and minerals that he wished to drop in casually unannounced on the customer stores that she was his right hand the pupil of his eye and the fountain of his heart Subdued by the torrent Phoebe re taliated with only the feeblest of endearments herself and conceded him the point So it would have been irrelevant on his part to submit as a further argument that he had no intention of making an ass of himself before young Cameron his protegé and the alter-ego of his youth by giving freshman-content lectures on Kinetabs

Before he left Ives Stanhope called also "Professor Kidd tells me you re going on a little tour I was hoping you d let me give a quiet little party for you——"

But I m leaving almost at once——"

Oh dear and I'll be in Washington myself soon Ives s voice had a stern dignity I m a friendly witness you know

Oh yes Congratulations Ives The Healthopathically balanced individual obeys the laws of the community punctiliously Almost as a matter of *noblesse oblige* so to speak

Beautifully put' When I abandoned the Party I had come to realize that Communism is a most dreadful imbalance you know? I hope you agree with me because I m rather developing that theory in my new book Utopia Repudiated and I'll want you to check me out on the parts that have reference to M H And do have a nice trip Doc We'll try to stay in one piece until you return!

So thus inspired and encouraged to depart from the realm of Blabbermouthry he and Mark set out early one June morning in the convertible

As he and Mark left the smog of Paradise behind and began the climb into the mountains it came to Spartan suddenly that his chronic fatigue had its origin not in overwork not in any recognizable anxiety but in sheer boredom

To his surprise he was received calmly by the proprietors of the rural drugstores and health food stores which sold his products All unwilling he was accorded the arch deference usually reserved for the visiting minister but no more and the glittering Dr Mc Clintock found that he caught sparks only in the eyes of the local loiterers and that because of his ostentatious car rather than his identity Then as he and Mark moved farther and farther away from the influence of Los Angeles and out into a tawny and pink and purple world that was the desert he discovered that a delightful emptiness was spread through his mind and that the term for it was probably peace

They rose each morning before five to set out across a landscape that was surely without atmosphere for each mound each clump of desert scrub stood out as though there was nothing between it and the sky but vacant space Now for the first time Spartan was seeing the West almost ten years ago when he had come across this country in a bus he had been unconscious and in a drunken sleep

Then after a day or so of visiting one small desert town after an other he grew reminiscent, garrulous The signs before the oasis filling stations charmed him Modern Conveniences He had soon discovered that the conveniences were nevertheless little upright oblongs standing in the sand with the inevitable crescents on the doors The modernity lay here in the bright yellow paint newly splashed over one such little house or there in the pale green tissue hanging smartly on a roller in another

Mark Cameron was scornful of such wistful pretentiousness until Spartan said You know Mark until I was in college I would have called those privies the best plumbing I d ever seen Ours was painted brown—none of this extravagant class-conscious yellow for us

In Arizona they pursued their business in the morning slept through the hot afternoon hearing the dripping of the water coolers in the windows and drank cold beer on the tiny porches of motel cabins in the evenings

Spartan continued to talk He said We had an anatomy prof who was a real heller a Kraut He s dean now—God Gus must be in his seventies He was almost a dwarf but he could climb on your back and ride you until you couldn t sleep nights

He said Materia Medica was a hell of a bore

He said Immunology was the thing in those days Or surgery Every hick who wiped his nose on his sleeve and scraped up enough to go to med school wanted to be a surgeon

He said going through the Ute mountains Take your foot off that accelerator! What the hell you think this is the Freeway?

He said over a glass of cold beer at the next stop How much do you figure exactly it will take you to get through school? I mean living decently not skimping on anything?

When Mark opened up finally he released a flood of all the damn fool ideas and ideals one has at twenty-one He lined up each one and trotted it out singly waiting warily to see if Spartan would shoot it down That one safely past the barrier he risked the next

Spartan didn t laugh He saluted each idea gravely and stood at attention for the next And when diffidently Spartan took Andrew Fuqua s old watch from his pocket and said I thought you—uh—might like to have this It belonged to a fine doctor who was once very good to me Mark was equally grave and putting on the watch immediately said only "Thank you sir I appreciate it. In

silence the tradition was named and the pact made Spartan knew that Mark would never embarrass him by referring to the matter again

Then on the last day when they were crossing the mountains Mark said something that would have thrown Spartan into a fit of *exasperation only a very short time ago Mark revealed timidly* Well I don t have to worry about losing out on my women to the Commerce majors like Ted does I ve got the one I want all lined up

'You don t mean you re planning to get married? Spartan asked comfortably

Mark looked at him quickly and then back to the road. "I—I guess so To Wendy Salpinger sir

Wendy? My God she s only fourteen years old!

"She s eighteen Mark said

"Really Spartan tried to picture Wendy but of the Salpingers she had made the least impression She was like a permanent vase of flowers in the living room charming pretty and of no particular consequence She was an appointment of the Salpingers s life that Mark for the time being could probably do without "You ll have plenty of time for that Spartan said You ve got five years ahead of you you know Four in med and then your internship Wendy ll wait"

No Mark said briefly she won t He shoved his dark brows together forbiddingly and Spartan pitied him leisurely and not too deeply This like everything else would work itself out

On his return, he then noticed what should have been obvious long before Milt had become rather plodding and silent a problem was nagging at him Nancy too was less talkative and she had be gun to mirror gaze coming upon her reflection unexpectedly she would halt and meditate and if she were unaware that she was be ing watched a hand would creep up to her chin patting the soft roll there or lifting higher smooth out the lines around the eyes

In Spartan s hunting lodge bar Nancy sat brooding while Milt prowled forlornly about the room stopping here to rest on a stool and there in a chair before resuming his aimless journey again

Are you two growing melancholic or something? Spartan de manded What s going on around here?

Family troubles Nancy said gloomily "Wendy wants to get married In fact the little brat is insisting"

'To Mark' Milt burst out 'My God he hasn t a penny to his name if he gets through school it s because you re putting him through And Wendy wants to marry him Now!

Oh put her in a convent school until she calms down Joni said tolerantly She ll get it out of her system in three months and be baying off after someone else"

You don t know kids these days" Nancy said darkly What they want they want right away I waited for Milt eight years But it was different then I *knew* we could get married in the end. We didn t have things like the draft and atom bombs then"

If it weren t for the money angle Spartan said how would you two feel about Mark?

Fine the Salpingers said in unison

Still feeling removed after his brief trip with Mark from the single-minded slightly panicked concern with which every city dweller regards his affairs Spartan was as yet able to look at the matter objectively 'Then let them get married he said blandly receiving the looks of horror the Salpingers threw him and the remotely disgusted one Joni wore

And how would he support my daughter? Milt demanded And after all the money I spent on that girl rearing her in a standard of living that Mark won t be able to duplicate for——

Oh balls Spartan said deliberately Now look who s flipping his lid You were going to send Wendy to college anyway, weren t you? All right go ahead' You re intending to feed her aren t you? And clothe her? So what s stopping you if she marries Mark? Let the two of us subsidize the kids You pay Wendy s share I ll pay Mark s"

While Milt continued to stare at him Nancy, ever mindful of reality demanded tartly And what happens when Wendy ups and has a baby in algebra class some fine morning?

Spartan grinned at her mockingly Why that Grandma is where you come in With Ted in school all day, and Wendy married and in school both you don t have a blessed thing to do but baby sit

"Well now—— Nancy began but Joni intercepted with a sudden enthusiastic Spart' That s a swell idea' Darling don t tell me that at this late date you re beginning to believe in young love?

I intend for that kid to study occasionally Spartan said with

dignity if I'm to pay his way And he won t get a thing done if he s mooning around about Wendy all day

"Yes but both of us——" Milt said thoughtfully

'Had girls who were two hundred miles from campus" Spartan reminded him And I don t remember whether you ever discovered the existence of a certain houseful of generous young ladies down by the river but I did Miss Gloria s I believe the name was

Caught thus unexpectedly Milt busied himself with a quick promenade to the beer chest. 'That s beside the——"

Oh ho!" Joni cried "Well weren t you two the campus cutups though Spartie dear do tell me and Nancy all about it!

If you think we can swing it, Milt put in hastily "I m all for it. Believe me Fartin I want to see the kids happy and if you really want to help me I don t have to tell you how grateful Nancy will you get off your spreading fanny and kiss him for me? What re you good for any more?"

"I d love to Nancy said graciously rising from her chair "Is there anything else I can do to show my gratitude Milt? I hope——

"Yes" Joni said 'Sit down before I shoot you That mawkish lump of humanity over there happens to be mine whatever that s worth"

Only Miss Cameron disapproved of the coming marriage but Mark was vague on her reasons for doing so Distressed but not sufficiently to be discouraged he continued with his plans to marry Wendy

v

Spartan s respite from the hectic ordeal of Healthopathy and his patients had been brief after all sometimes he thought it had been merely an illusion or a daze brought on by the combination of heat sun and sand as he and Mark had driven mile after mile across the flat floor of the West. But interlude or figment his easy contentment seemed to have ended with Mark s and Wendy s wedding and now the voices of his patients were shriller more exacerbating less endurable than ever Compared to their anguished recitals of flayed vanities even Phoebe s customary attempts to be audible on the phone seemed less harrowing

Gradually he became aware that he was drinking too much He put it that way to himself, *was drinking* relegating the matter to an unoccupied niche reserved for matters that were not only unimpor tant but temporary also Thus reassured (for he did not get drunk had not since Mark s wedding) he allowed himself a drink or two between the morning s patients a cocktail or two at lunch and an other drink or two in the afternoon before he went home to his cocktails before dinner He was never drunk he could remark to himself with perfect honesty The corollary—that he was never sober either—did not present itself to his mind

The College was closed for the summer and he had been invited as a guest lecturer during the August quarter session of a college in the northern part of the state a school similarly engaged in grind ing out hopeful charlatans He debated—all in all he would spend three weeks away from home—and decided to accept A change of scenery might do the trick again

Hoary arranged for Dr Cramer the San s physician and sur geon to come over to the Center during Spartan s absence Orig inally despising the man Spartan had grudgingly come to recognize the San s need for such a practitioner Oh I suppose you can call his ilk second rate physicians he had said sourly to Bootmaker They re competent to diagnose a case of hypochondria I guess

And the state happens to consider him competent enough to grant him a few privileges in the way of drugs and narcotics that you haven t been honored with Bootmaker snapped You wouldn t hear of an M D So this is the next best thing

Reluctantly Spartan had to agree Because of Cramer the drug rooms of both the San and the Center were well stocked Only Cramer Spartan and Bootmaker had keys the two latter in their capacity as owners of the business

It was arranged then that Cramer come over to care for the scat tered Healthopathy patients Spartan still had while his assistants could handle the Mental Healthopathy sessions Spartan had only to brief Dr Cramer before leaving

The draperies were drawn back so that he could look down on the street from where he sat at his desk Below on Wilshire the Cadil lacs streamed along one after the other Dr Cramer s pale blue one cut ruthlessly in front of a lone Ford in order to make the right turn

into the Healthopathy Center s parking lot And there Spartan knew it would take its place with his black Cad and the green and the sporty yellow and the two-toned beige This was the year of the Cadillac and the M G The heraldic crest of every Success in town that year would have borne the Cadillac rampant one front wheel spinning in the air on a field of dollar signs

Every crumbum in southern California has one he thought grumpily and then remembered that Hoary still had his Lincoln Continental. It had been repainted refurbished and practically rebuilt, but he still drove it Idly Spartan wondered what the restaurant and night-club parking lot attendants made of Hoary s Lincoln Was it parked along with the Cads in the front row of the lot nearest the street? Did they accord it that honor instinctively recognizing as the old time colored servants of the South were supposed to a lady when they saw one?

Dr Cramer was announced and he turned with an acid distaste in his mouth like an eructation to greet the San s most erudite medico It was his habit to think of Cramer sneeringly always But Cramer appraising Spartan in turn was rubbery in his presence bouncing lightly from topic to topic like a solid ball Spartan had only to attempt slapping Cramer down to become reacquainted with his rebounding properties

Dr Evan Cramer was in the neighborhood of thirty five or six His hair was clipped close and he wore bulky horn rimmed glasses as well as bow ties and British made shoes He looked as though he might be a successful lyric writer for popular hits or perhaps someone s agent He was arresting in dress manner facial expression and method of driving a car and Spartan often thought that in years to come people would look back on the Cramers of Hollywood and Beverly Hills and shake their heads in wonderment Like the zoot suiters the boys who barricaded themselves behind horn rims would remain forever a mystery They appeared flourished and vanished that was all They were the social mutations of an era and he hoped they would not be hardy

However the day of Dr Cramer s extinction had not yet arrived for here he was bounding in and crying a jolly greeting attempting to shake Spartan s hand minutely noting every detail of the room and its contents and accurately judging Spartan s present disposition—all at the same time "Well Doctor it will be a pleasure to——

"There will be practically nothing for you to do, Spartan interrupted rudely The Kinetabs bunch are all taking their courses of treatment nicely and the M H patients will be handled by my assistants If anyone new comes in give them a Kineticodiagnosis and hold them off until my return

Unless, of course Dr Cramer said pleasantly, "the case is urgent.

In which case Spartan said send them out to an M D We don t handle injuries here you know that

Cramer sulked briefly before bouncing back As you say However out at the San I handle——

Out at the San Spartan repeated after him pointedly This is the Healthopathy Center, remember And you are a nonaffiliate associate Here we practice Healthopathy not Chiropractic not Osteopathy not Naturopathy not Naprapathy nor yet shall I say Medicine Just Healthopathy Doctor if you please

Cramer looked as though he were muttering although his lips did not move at all

The phone buzzed Doctor Mac, Miss Gaily said Mr Mark Cameron wants to see you Shall I send him in?

Watching Cramer s flush recede and his mouth revert to its perpetual merry smirk, Spartan said Send him in Doctor Cramer and I are about through"

Cramer s salary out at the San was twenty thousand a year In his own field he was an object of disparagement His position among his colleagues was almost what that of an M D would have been had he gone on Hoary s staff Now again he was exhibiting to Spartan twenty thousand dollars a year worth of smile Hoary seemed to think he was worth it

Mark Cameron stood in the doorway 'Oh I m sorry your nurse——

Come on in Spartan said Doctor Cramer and I were just finishing To verify this he rose and so did Cramer

Well Cramer said have a nice trip Doctor McClintock"

"Thank you Spartan said His further silence was reserved

Dismissed and pretending not to know it Cramer hesitated at the door Oh—about your drug room key, Doctor——'

"I won t be taking it with me Spartan said shortly

"No certainly Doctor But I *am* responsible——"

"It will be locked in my desk where I always keep it Now then Mark how s married life? Oh—good by Doctor Cramer"

Alone with his protegé Spartan grinned "That was Evan Cramer I didn t think you d want to meet him And besides he s the devil to get rid of How s Wendy?"

Mark glowed briefly "She s wonderful." He hesitated, "I'm not interrupting your day am I?

Hell no I'm just piddlin around before I go home and pack. We'll be *flying up tonight. Here let me fix you a drink—no—better yet—* fix me one I m too lazy to stand up in this heat. There s ice in the bar Just above the book panel to the left, that s it. Make mine Scotch of course And there s a beakerful of Martinis if——"

"What, sir?" Mark said. "I didn t hear that last."

Spartan felt odd the heat his forehead was damp "I said that there s a beakerful of Martinis in the frig I broke the shaker this morning and borrowed the beaker from the lab I——"

Mark returned to the desk with Spartan s drink 'Doc you all right? You look kind of pasty

Mark s head blurred in Spartan s vision The two hands holding out the drink resolved into one and Spartan reached for it. "Damn heat," he muttered. "It'll be a pleasure to get up north and get away from it."

"But it s always cool at night, Mark said in an inane effort to be helpful

Spartan brushed it away What s on your mind kid? You and Wendy running short?"

"Oh no nothing like that," Mark said hastily

And I'd have to drag it out of you if it was that, Spartan thought, with a trace of amusement, a dash of pride and a pinch of reminiscence

"It s my aunt, Doc She came back Tuesday—you know she left town rather than come to the wedding Anyway she came back and I went over to see her She looks like hell that s all I don t know what this Preebles guy is treating her for—autointoxication, I guess No that was Higbee out at the San or imbalance

Anyway we had a hell of a row about it—— Mark faltered and then resumed in a calmer tone I won t bore you with all the

details, but I finally got her to promise she d come to see you I was wondering—if you thought there was something wrong with her—whether you could convince her to go to Milt or somebody"

Spartan was doubtful I tried that once you know If you can t get her to go to an M D how do you expect me——

"She thinks you hang out the moon Mark said, and suddenly flushed 'That s why I figured if you really put it to her, she might do what you tell her

Why won t she go to Milt? What s her real reason?

Mark grew uncomfortable Well for one thing she hates all M D s And then Milt s a oh well you know what it s all about. When I said I wanted to marry Wendy, she yelled around about my not being white any more and a lot of talk like that. And then she started in on how I was going to be a Jewish butcher just like Milt Doc it was awful!

Yes Spartan said dryly I can imagine He swirled his drink tactfully allowing Mark to get himself in hand Damn that hypochondriac female he thought angrily the kid will have enough on his mind this fall with a new wife to tame and his studies without her nagging at him every time he goes to see her I'll try of course he said But it doesn t seem that I could have much influence with her I should think she d resent me too After all she knows doesn t she, that I m the one who s helping you through school not Milt?

Now Mark s flush was pitiful but he managed a grin patently asking Spartan s understanding for what he was going to say "Well she thinks you re just playing along with me until I come to my senses Then I'll enter the College of Healthopathy I mean I'll——

Spartan laughed easily and without rancor Oh Lord, the Faithful can rationalize themselves into believing anything!

I don t understand sir

Never mind All right Mark as soon as I get back you have Miss Cameron come over here I ll check her over as carefully as I can and if anything seems wrong I ll try to talk some sense into her head Now go home and beat Wendy or something and forget about it You may not realize it but all hell is going to break over your head next month when you walk into that dissecting room for the first time You re going to find out —Spartan indulged in a bit of pomposity—

'what work really is He finished his drink and added rather cruelly You and Ted amuse me I guess you do Milt too You think you re tough——

Mark was holding perfectly still for all this

but you just wait' And if Spartan added to himself pri vately you let Ted Salpinger get ahead of you I ll have your scalp for it Since he suspected that Milt was indulging in similar thoughts he looked forward to the first heat of the race with enthusiasm

He took Joni north with him and as she had darkly predicted his three weeks as guest lecturer were a period of unremitting boredom From the beginning his brief course in Healthopathic Pharmacody namics which was in reality an accurate and technical discourse on vitamin therapy and related food accessories sailed beautifully above the heads of the dullards gazing up at him so earnestly By the second week Dr Spartan McClintock who was approaching the dignified age where he could rightly be called august appeared before his classes urbanely serenely not too perceptibly but positively swacked

Over the weekends he and Joni entertained an ebullient self assured gentleman called George S Ferrar previously known to the citizens of Blabbermouthry down south as G Singleton Ferrar To Spartan he was still Tony but to Joni he had mysteriously become Doll

At first amused with this Spartan grew annoyed and then inex plicably (Spartan thought it inexplicable) jealous Finally he brought it up one night when they were undressing for bed Seated on the edge of the bed shoe in one hand he attacked You and Tony were certainly soul mates tonight he said and added nastily doll!

"Oh be quiet' Joni said I loathe belligerent drunks

I am not drunk'

That s true she admitted But you might as well be Saturated is a better word for you She sprawled on the bed and touched his arm contritely I m sorry Spart And about Tony I didn t think you gave a damn whether I liked him or not

You really don t have to fall all over him do you?

Did I? She thought about it seriously for a moment her large eyes examining him as impersonally as though he were inanimate Maybe I did. You know it s funny but underneath, Tony and I

always knew we had something in common We never discussed it, but it was always there whenever we saw each other We sym pathized

Because you both had it so tough? he asked sarcastically dis pleased with her dispassionate manner and unreasonably aching to start a row

Yes Joni said Because we both had it so tough He with that bitch Isolde and me

with me?

Don t you see it at all? she asked curiously Tony and I are alike we re simply people and we want pretty much the same things out of life He wants a nice ordinary, secure job and I want a nice, ordinary secure husband We re the last people in the world to get mixed up with egomaniacs like you and dear little Boots And when we do we just get trampled for our trouble All right sneer! I know you think I m jealous of Isolde but you re wrong I used to be be cause you think she s such a much, but now it would be like being jealous of a—a battleship She s all guns and self-sufficiency and Bri tannia rules the waves She s impregnable you can t sink her and you can t knock her out of the water—she s just there and I just sail on around her And you re exactly likē that too

Lower your voice he said curtly still hoping to anger her

It was a futile effort Joni continued to regard him calmly Was I yelling? I m sorry You don t particularly like what I m saying do you?

I m hungrily devouring each jewel of a word

I wonder what it is she said still in that same tone of impersonal curiosity that makes some people the way you and Isolde are It isn t just that you ve got ability Milt Salpinger can match you brain cell for brain cell and yet he s as comfortable as an old shoe And good as Isolde is at her music she s not really the genius she or her father thinks

In other words Isolde and I are two mediocrities——

I didn t say that! Joni said growing a trifle tart You started this by complaining because Tony and I are friends All right I m just telling you why we are We used to feel sorry for each other and Tony still feels sorry for me He escaped and I didn t. Amen Let s turn in.

Tony was kicked out

"Some people are just lucky Joni said and turned her back. 'Oh forget it there s nothing worse than a whore waxing sentimental is there?

He let the shoe drop to the floor and sat staring into himself "Joni " he said 'what s the matter with me these days? Am I just getting old?"

"Look in the mirror " she said 'you re still pretty if that s what s bothering you No I don t know what s your trouble darling and if I did I wouldn t have the courage to tell you Oh no you don t! You get out of this bed and turn off that light, I was under the cover first!

He came back to the Center from his three weeks as guest lecturer his first appointment on his return being with Mark s aunt, Miss Viola Cameron As soon as she entered the office for her preliminary chat he saw that he had remembered her as someone else after all. Viola Cameron s long nosed face widely separated eyes and domed forehead would have looked suitable gazing out from a clump of brush. She was visibly a sheep having all those characteristics that are seldom attributed to sheep although they belong to them There was a stubborn stupidity in the eyes lit deep from within a sullen determination so ponderous and slow in effecting its goals that it could easily be mistaken for passivity or even gentleness

Spartan did not make this mistake he knew the deceptive tenacity with which the Faithful block all efforts to inform them of the facts of reality Seemingly grazing placidly on her misconceptions Viola Cameron would ignore the intruder in her pasture for as long as need be until, catching him unawares she could charge with all the trampling force of her witless convictions He had seen her kind before he had built his whole career on them

He made her aware of his presence in the pasture cautiously Mark tells me you aren t feeling too well these days Miss Cameron. What seems to be the trouble?

She reared back and studied him warily Under her ornate hat the long face was expressionless she was judging his motives Oh, that boy! she said finally "I guess I don t have to tell you Doctor how upset I am with all his notions And that awful wife that——"

'He s young Spartan said soothingly as though that excused Mark s integrity intelligence and general worth "However he s quite concerned about you, Miss Cameron. Maybe we can get to the

bottom of your trouble You seem a bit underweight—is your appetite good?

Its excellent I ve been suffering from autointoxication recently but *Dr Loudish is giving me a course of colonics and I m improving* daily I don t seem to be assimilating my food though although I m on a special diet of brewer s yeast and papaya food and Doctor Loudish suggests that perhaps I might have a slight kinetic imbalance But *he s assured me that it s nothing serious and that autointoxication* can cause an imbalance——

Spartan decided it was time to approach closer "Why, Miss Cameron! Doctor Loudish fine a practitioner as he is I m sure is *not* a Healthopathist! I thought you understood that *Healthopathy has* completely cast aside the old superstitions of bowel poisoning——

Spinal maladjustment Miss Cameron put in stubbornly "can cause an imbalance too

He stared at her shocked speechless and struggling to overcome the terrible insult At last Miss Cameron lowered her gaze penitently

Doctor Preebles himself said she faltered

With an effort Dr McClintock gathered himself together Dear *Miss Cameron he murmured forgivingly 'You haven t come to* me a moment too soon How can you have forgotten that kinetic balance can be effected *only* by a trained Healthopathist?

Or sending people out to medical doctors! she said rallying for a moment.

Certainly Spartan agreed smoothly He smiled on her as though she were a colleague 'They are the skilled labor of the medical world And the Healthopathist the architect of perfect health would be foolish not to engage the service of laborers Isn t that right, Miss Cameron? But I don t think we should worry about that right now Suppose you just tell me how you ve been feeling recently I want to know whether you sleep well whether you feel energetic or tired, exactly what you eat and so forth He uncapped his pen and looked at her expectantly Just a general picture before we start your complete Kineticodiagnosis

The general picture was vague she slept poorly her appetite was not good (contrary to what she had declared before) and on occasion she was nauseated She was constipated

The rest of her tirade he took for what it was she often awakened in the middle of the night to find her heart pounding wildly, due to—

as she explained—her swollen gaseous stomach pressing on her heart (the colonics were taking care of that nicely) She suffered monstrous migraine headaches whenever one of her vertebrae slipped out of line which was happening constantly for she had a chronic weakness in that area however the headaches were also due in part to the fact that her eyesight had been failing but of course a few eye exercises Dr Loudish had suggested were already making her more sharp-sighted than she had ever been before Anyway she was learning to breathe through her nostrils—inhale through the right exhale through the left—and this allayed the head pain immeasurably if temporarily Her fatigue was actually a delayed recovery from the removal of a fecal stone the size of a hen s egg that had been washed down from her colon and had been judged to be about twenty five years old probably having formed one day when she had attempted to smoke a cigarette and had swallowed some of the smoke into her stomach where it caused a knot of food there to petrify

"I think, perhaps we should start in on the Kineticodiag——" Spartan began

she had been vaccinated against her better judgment for her trip to Mexico City (there had been some sort of altercation between Miss Cameron and the immigration officials there) and her arm had swollen hideously at the point where the colored blood of some Mexican had mingled with her own this naturally would have led to amputation had she not immediately gone on a fast in order to purge herself of the foreign poisons

Miss Gaily will prepare you—— Spartan put in helplessly

but whatever it was she at least was not suffering from cancer as she did not smoke and only people who smoked developed cancers as has been amply proved by the fact that not one single case of cancer had ever been reported in Europe before the advent of tobacco indulgence introduced in Europe by Columbus along with syphilis also caused by the use of tobacco No she felt sure she had a mild imbalance complicated by autointoxication and a spinal subluxation Mark was simply too hard to get along with unless he got his way every minute and she had fully intended consulting Doctor McClintock anyway as soon as she had completed her present course of colonics One other thing on her trip East she had been forced to drink fluorinized water as there was seldom any pure bottled water to be had in hotels and had naturally been poisoned by

it not to mention rendered sterile although in her case this was not important However as the Founder of Healthopathy it was Doctor McClintock s clear duty to warn the nation of this foul plot of the dentists and medical doctors to sterilize the nation under the pretext of preventing tooth decay a plot no doubt fostered by Communists and the aluminum companies of America

Furthermore she had absolute faith in Doctor McClintock because he did not smoke Some practitioners did she could smell it on their breaths and always suspected them thereafter

I think we should go to the examining room now!" Spartan said when she paused for an instant

Miss Cameron trusted that Doctor McClintock understood that she was alone in the world living on a small income and could afford only the least expensive of treatments?

He escorted her to the door patting her back reassuringly "Miss Cameron we don t want to hear another word about that! You just leave everything to me I promised Mark that you d get the best of care and we ll just forget about the fees Now how s that?

It was quite satisfactory to Miss Cameron Though hardly more than she deserved her manner stated clearly

When the results of her lab tests and X rays were on his desk, he knew she would have to be sent out. There was a growth in the ascending colon He couldn t be sure of course but in order to frighten her into her senses he would make the assumption

Miss Cameron returned fully expecting to be given bottles and bottles of free Kinetabs and further smiles from the charming Dr McClintock Instead he attacked her without warning He described in detail the agony attendant to death from cancer He dwelt on the odor of this agony the indescribable stink of death that cancer bestows on its victim so that in the end the patient dies anguished repulsive and detested as well as pitied

Unless——

Miss Cameron would not accept the unless She would hold Doctor McClintock beneath her contempt if he were actually suggesting that she place herself in the hands of a Jew medical doctor

"Miss Cameron " Spartan said "you tell me just what kind of doctor you want. Green hair purple eyes—I ll find him But you are to get to an M D without fail You re not playing with a case of chronic

constipation this time this isn t a matter of having your backbone manipulated You may be suffering from cancer and if you are only a surgeon can save your life! If you continue in your present course the end of the line is death And it still won t come until you ve been praying for it at the top of your voice! Does that impress you at all Miss Cameron?

She raised her head from her grazing and gave him her sheep stare Then wordlessly she rose and trotted away to another part of the pasture where the crank ideas were more succulent.

Although Miss Cameron left it was he who had been calmly dismissed

He made an effort to see her again he called her daily on the phone No one answered He was as vague as he dared be to Mark and still impress him that his aunt must see a physician Mark tried but he had his own worries now He had become acquainted with a slim volume of prose usually called Gray on Anatomy Then he reported to Spartan that Miss Cameron had gone down to San Diego for the winter there was a Doctor Somebody-or-other down there she had been babbling about

The growth could as easily be benign Spartan told himself and Miss Cameron drifted from his mind It was noon and time for a quick one—just to stimulate his appetite of course

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When the cool weather set in Paradise and after the winter rains came everyone seemed to undergo a revival of spirits Eyes bright walks brisk manners alert Spartan s friends acquaintances patients and enemies swarmed about him talking talking talking trying to penetrate his alcoholic haze

Hoary was elated over Isolde s projected appearance in another recital this one calculated to make the critics eat their long deserved humble pie Quent Quarles had made his decision to dabble in politics Ives Stanhope was noisily proclaiming that his nearly completed book would expose every Communist in Hollywood and even one in Palm Springs Wendy Salpinger Cameron had trouble keeping down her morning cup of coffee not in algebra class as predicted but in Introduction to Psychology thus throwing Milt and Nancy into a grandparental uproar Phoebe Kidd had discovered a playwright in

N

Baltimore who had actually had one of his works run on Broadway for three days Evan Cramer had bought himself a sailboat and was storming the salty section of society in Balboa (where did he get the money? Spartan wondered) Doc Stanley duly reported the bonanza in chlorophyll Kinetabs and also that on a Tuesday afternoon when the sun shone briefly a flying saucer was clearly seen hovering over the Kinetabs factory in the Valley Joni and Tony Ferrar were conducting a rather juvenile (to Spartan) correspondence the Reverend Willis Oates had gone to England to organize a London group called Bobbies for the Bible Leela Moraine stylishly discovered not in a drugstore but a Mental Healthopathy group session had been chosen for the leading role in a colossal technicolor version of the story of Queen Esther from the Bible and Mark Cameron and Ted Salpinger were swaggering and garrulous after their ordeal of mid terms

There was also talk seemingly conspiratorial and not meant to reach Spartan s ears as yet about the First Healthopathic Convention to be held that spring in his honor The rumor grew into fact A studio official called to say it would be quite satisfactory to have Leela Moraine granted the title of Miss Healthopathy and what other stars of the entertainment world had been lined up? And right after that call Milt was on the phone asking him to have lunch

Sure Spartan said but I ll probably drink mine As usual

You drink too Milt began then altered his statement to " fine I ll have a cocktail with you How about that Italian place?

Spartan had four maybe five cocktails at lunch and a bowl of thin soup Milt was dismayed and tried in vain to conceal it Spartan grew defiantly jolly and a trifle loud Yet Milt said nothing

On the way back to the office he discovered that it had started to rain and he concentrated with drunken care on his driving

Miss Gaily met him as he was going down the hall towards his own office Oh Doctor Doctor Bootmaker s been calling everywhere for you! He s on the phone right now will you——

All right " Spartan said I ll take it in my office Tell him to hang on

He went in threw his raincoat over a chair and moved directly to the bookcase that concealed the bar Then with a glass of Scotch and ice he sat down at his desk and lifted the phone

"Oh thank God" Bootmaker said Come out to the San right away will you?

"I ve got patients lined up from here to breakfast Hoary He took a long drink and shook his head at the impact choking slightly

" urgent" Bootmaker was saying All I can say over the phone Tried to find Cramer everywhere but it s his day off *Hurry for God s sake will you?*

Bootmaker was totally rattled His hands trembled on the edge of the treatment table as Spartan examined the unconscious girl Her family—" Bootmaker babbled— if she told them where she was going Spart, you ve got to pull her through!

Spartan removed the stethoscope from his ears He was quite drunk and he knew it But this other feeling that blurred his vision was either panic or a maniacal rage he could not stop to analyze it

Preebles said something about rheumatic fever Bootmaker chattered on moisture bubbling at the corners of his mouth but he didn t say it had affected her heart Spart this girl is important! If she—you ve got to keep her from——

She s dead There s nothing I can do Spartan said 'Who aborted her you or Preebles?

Bootmaker blanched the sweat on his forehead looking like beads of wax I had no idea her heart was weak! I wouldn t have touched her But Preebles assured me that she had told no one where she was going or what for——

This is your work then Spartan said

We can t stop to moralize! Bootmaker shouted We ve got to get her out of here We can t just sign a death certificate and get rid of her—her family will——"

Who is she? Spartan said His voice seemed to his ears to be a roar the way voices are when heard through a stethoscope

Bootmaker moved his mouth under his neat mustache several times and then took a card from his pocket the type of card used to note down a patient s name address and current bill Spartan read the girl s name an important name backed up by money and connections

Where s that bastard Preebles?"

Bootmaker licked his lips In his office I guess He was going to drop in and see her this afternoon

Get him here"

Spartan covered the girl s face with the sheet She was very pretty, she was about seventeen, he judged He turned to Bootmaker How long did you think you could keep this sort of thing from me? Or is that why you hired Cramer? He was shouting trying to control his thick tongue My God I might have known! What a perfect setup all the privacy in the world just keep them here for twenty four hours or so A drug room and Cramer for emergencies You couldn t lose on a proposition like that, could you Hoary?

Still pale Bootmaker managed a feeble She would have died in childbirth anyway Spart If her heart couldn t take this "

That s very comforting Spartan said beginning to sway a bit Suppose you just call up her father and tell him that Go on he s at the studio right now Call him up! Tell him she would have died anyway, tell him to send over an undertaker who can keep his mouth shut and I ll be happy to sign the death certi—— Oh God Hoary you re such a swine such a swine Go have Preebles called"

He staggered to a stool and sat down heavily Outside the rain continued falling so straight that it did not even strike the windowpanes There was no sound inside or out merely the feeling of great pressure against the ears He looked at the covered form of the dead girl on the table He might have known Hoary would run an abortion mill here at the San It was too pat all the quacks in town rushing their patients out for a little overnight rest It was perfect it could have gone on forever if a certain kid hadn t picked up Preebles s name from some Hollywood whore and decided to get herself out of a hard situation the easy way He stood up tottering and raised the sheet to look at the girl s face One eye was open—she was winking at him with glassy obscenity Letting the sheet drop he sank to the stool again It was the same one her picture had been in the papers only a day or so ago She had been smiling with that appealing smugness that young girls assume when facing the camera She was so young and pretty she was going to be married

She was also pregnant by another man

Joni had remarked on how comely the girl was They certainly marry these kids off young around here Oh well better than letting them run around getting into trouble

A very important youngster and with her had died perhaps

years of hard determined, unending work He needed another drink very badly

Preebles came in with Bootmaker and stopped short when he saw the mound on the treatment table

"Take her Spartan said to Preebles she s all yours Get her out of here he repeated to Preebles "You brought her here You take her out. In this neat treatment room with the rain falling quietly outside not even streaking the panes it seemed a reasonable request Everything done quietly and without fuss in a place like this In a mansion with lace work galleries and cupolas containing plush round window seats one did not create a commotion one merely removed anything unpleasant. Go on do it, Spartan urged Preebles in a near pleasant tone He saw without attaching importance to either the slack mouthed astonishment of Bootmaker and the taut lipless rage of Preebles

As though having once used a word it was gone from his vocabulary forever Preebles sparingly let slip a few from his mouth No he said tightly I m out I m in the clear He lifted the sheet received the dead girl s roguish invitation and let the cloth drop over her hastily

It seemed to be Spartan s turn Closing his eyes for a moment against the gleaming reflection of the lights against the white walls and white metal equipment he echoed Preebles I m out too I have witnesses as to where I was all day Bootmaker was already frantic when he tried to get me on the phone The evidence may be circumstantial but it still points to just one person

Never more professional in appearance and bearing Preebles turned his gaze on Bootmaker Well?

Oh no you don t, Bootmaker said 'No no you re not going to leave me Then suddenly he had control of himself You re not in the clear Preebles You brought her here And as for McClintock he s my partner And as partners we act as each other s agent I believe a jury could infer something like that. No gentlemen we re letting ourselves become unnerved by a very unfortunate accident. I think the thing to do is decide very calmly how much anybody knows about the girl s whereabouts Now who knows?

'No one Preebles said I impressed that on her very strongly I believe she told her parents she would be staying the night at a friend s house

"Your nurse? Bootmaker said

Don t worry Preebles said confidently

Like a mediator Bootmaker turned to Spartan. "Naturally, nobody at the Center knows anything either And if Preebles is right——"

Barring the fact that she might have confided in some girl friend or other Preebles interjected with a faint tremble in his voice

Again Bootmaker s hands began a slight palsied dance We ll have to trust to luck I suggest we take the body somewhere——"

We can t risk burying it Preebles said The undertaker might recognize her

I don t want any part of this Spartan thought First an unknown grave in a cemetery and now a rotting corpse in a ravine This is what it means to be a quack it s not all giving soothing sirup to hypochondriacs it s got to be this too And I must have known I stayed away from this place I never wanted to come near it I must have known it was only a matter of time before I was confronted with the body of a dead girl

McClintock s going to pieces he heard Preebles say contemptuously

He s drunk Bootmaker corrected "He s been drunk for months

"Who can you trust around here? Preebles said 'What about the nurse who assisted you?"

I kicked her out when I saw the girl was going. But I think she'll keep her mouth shut Cramer

Oh Preebles said meaningfully Anyone else?'

There was a silence No" Bootmaker said and there shouldn t be either This is something we ll have to handle together"

Without looking at either of them again or the body on the table Spartan rose and staggered from the room Outside he splashed across the gravel driveway to his car He sat behind the wheel listening to the rain beat on the roof and hood We can t risk burying her not this time not this one Only the others the ones like Allie and those who came after her unknowns to be dumped underground when the need arose He saw them all ages and all but three of them faceless A long procession that started with Allie and ended with a seventeen year-old girl being thrown from a car somewhere *If they re*

stupid enough to come to someone like me Bootmaker had once said *the world can easily do without them or their progeny* I can no longer reconcile myself to that line of thought Hoary a girl of seventeen is incapable of making such a decision for herself Stupidity and ignorance are not the same thing

I can t go back to the Center he told himself I ll have to go home and get drunk Drunker I ll have Joni come over and explain it again to me I ll get her to repeat that story about how kind Bootmaker was to her once when she was pregnant and abandoned She might even know of a nice place to dump the body of a seventeen year-old

How many lived how many were able to resume their lives freed of an impossible burden? Statistically logically wasn t Bootmaker a bungling benefactor? He meant well and the women who d had abortions safely and went about whispering the fact to others—they meant well and the parents who let their children run around like little dogs in heat—they meant well and the Healthopathist who wouldn t perform the act, but spent the money—he meant well he didn t even know about it until it was all over and there was a strange body to dispose of It was all for the best everyone agreed on that—there were dozens and dozens of M D s in town who would agree with him in principle only somehow when it came down to it, they lacked the courage of their convictions Not for all the tea in China would they do it

Because it stank, that s why Aside from any moral or legal or philosophical standpoint it stank. It smelled the way that body in there on the table would if it weren t discovered for a week or so Whatever the result it was always a situation that presupposed a victim Any argument omitting that factor was like a cipher enclosed and compact—it still encompassed nothing

A city at night under the rain is a beautiful thing to look down upon He wondered if the people in the plane just now flying over head could see it too or were they above the clouds? At any rate they would have a smooth ride it was like flying endlessly through a black tunnel to fly in the rain The glass slipped from his hand and the room revolved He noted clinically that his drunken spinning was always the same neither clockwise nor counter-clockwise

as others said it was but past his eyes and over his head It was as though he were lazily falling downwards head over heels a leisurely descent Joni he called out

She stirred and he realized she was half supporting him on the couch her shoulder pillowing his head Pass out" she said quietly not unkindly but not with any particular compassion either It was the tone he used to tell her "Your slip s showing

He dreamed she was lying in a dark ravine somewhere dead, and her half-opened mouth was a pool of rainwater At first looking at her hair spread out wetly across earth and leaf mold he thought she must have drowned but that could not have been possible for he himself was desiccated to the bone and tormented by a maddening thirst In despair he bent over to kiss her dead face and the pool poured out of her mouth blackly and through the darkness he could see the gleam of one eye as she winked at him

He awoke to find the rain had stopped and an almost full moon was shining in on them Joni opened her eyes too quickly for her to have been asleep Can I get you some water?

God yes

She disappeared into the darkness gathered at the far end of the room and then returned By the window it was bright enough for him to see her clearly I blacked out What did I do this evening?

She gave him the water Not much You raved a lot about Hoary and the San That s about all

A fragment of memory washed up with the water he was drinking Did I yell at you too?

She sat down and looked beyond him out the plate-glass window that was really a wall to the city below 'Some she admitted You know don t you Spartan that you re cracking up? That kid Hoary killed is only a part of it.

He said to her profile Is this going to lead up to you telling me to quit and go to Europe?"

She shook her head still not looking at him But her hand closed over his tightly I know better now Even if you could quit you know what you re like you and your Healthopathy? You re like some man who s in love with a woman he can t have He closes his eyes when he makes love to whores That man can t forego sex and you can t give up what you re doing Today though you opened your eyes and saw what was lying underneath you I m sorry

Spartan I'm so goddamned sorry for you! He could see in the white luminescence of her face that her cheeks were dry I wouldn t she went on quietly "want to have a dead girl on my conscience either I keep seeing her somewhere lying face down in the mud Poor little kid Poor you Poor Hoary I don t know which of you to pity the most. The hopelessly stupid greedy quacks like Knox and Preebles and Higbee and Cramer or the hopelessly insane ones like Hoary or

Classify me Joni

"I can t yet Until I know how much you re really capable of The others are capable of anything—their limitations extend upwards only I think yours extend both ways I m not sure but I don t think you could ever perform an abortion not under any circumstances A thing like that is one of your prejudices You think it s—ignoble So I suppose you have other limitations too or prejudices whatever you want to call them Incapabilities I've been thinking about you for a long time now and I ve decided this a long time ago you once thought that there was nothing admirable you couldn t accomplish Then that was knocked out of you So you reverted and told your self that there was nothing evil enough so that you would refrain from doing it Now you re getting that idea knocked out of you too You ve spent your whole life trying to shoot way past one mark or the other and you haven t got the ammunition to hit either If that s a classification you re in it"

With a flood of gratitude he knew he was suddenly going to be violently noisily completely engrossingly sick It would take all his strength and concentration to get himself to the bathroom There vomiting and retching he would have no time to think of what Joni had just said or of the bodies of young girls or of the twenty or so years he had yet to live

The body of a young girl who had been missing for two days was found in the hills by a group of youngsters who had taken advantage of the first clement spring days to go hiking The cause of death seemed to be heart failure the papers reported although she had also undergone an illegal operation None of the members of her prominent family nor her friends could furnish the police the name of the doctor who might have performed the operation The family doctor a physician of impeccable standing had even been unaware

of the girl s pregnancy It was quite a shock the newspapers further understated to her father and mother also

The police announced unequivocally that they were aware of the identity of the abortionist and would arrest him within twenty four hours At the end of a week however Horace V Bootmaker, D E M was still at large composedly humming an aria as he sat in the office of his partner the eminent Healthopathist Dr Spartan McClintock

Bootmaker broke off his melody as Spartan returned from the bar to his chair glass in hand I don t suppose he said contemptuously it would be possible for you to lay off that stuff

Shut up Spartan said shortly I called you over here for other reasons than to listen to your advice It may interest you to know that I talked to your ex-son in law over the phone last night. Some little remark Preebles made that afternoon finally sank in

I m surprised Bootmaker said calmly that you understood anything at all considering your condition Well what did Tony have to say for himself? I suppose he wants to come back into the practice

Spartan looked at his partner with loathing toying with the idea of throwing his drink into that rufous smug face with the precisely sneering mouth Hardly he said dryly Nothing could induce Tony to return to that sewer you call the San Which brings me to my point He pulled towards him a list of names lying under a paper weight on the desk 'You are to fire the following people Cramer Morton Granger Dom——

Oh nonsense!" Bootmaker interrupted in an annoyed tone

Fire them Spartan said implacably or I ll have them arrested."

Bootmaker bit at his mustache We can t Spart We ll have to ease them out if you insist, but we can t simply fire them out of hand They know too much

About you maybe! It s your ass that s in the sling not mine And I m telling you to get rid of that bunch of snowbirds you ve got out there fast! My God you stupid swine how long do you think Cramer can get away with peddling the stuff? Are you crazy? Haven t you got sense enough to realize that playing tag with the local police is one thing but to have Cramer selling cocaine and half the staff hopped up all the time is another? I couldn t understand it—I had to make Tony repeat it several times before I could take it all in! What

are you trying to do ruin everything it s taken me almost ten years to build up?

You seem to be doing that without any assistance on my part Bootmaker said nastily

I didn t call you over here to argue with you Spartan said wearily Just do as I say Get rid of Cramer and those miserable addicts of his at once I made a big mistake not keeping up with what you were doing at the San but I intend to remedy that now I m going to clean up Healthopathy if it s the last thing I do and before it s too late I haven t made up my mind what to do about you yet—I'll let you know In the meantime——"

Be careful " Bootmaker said softly be very careful what you say

Spartan straightened in his chair and stared at his partner Bootmaker met his gaze directly the face immobile the eyes revealing nothing You re slipping faster than you realize Bootmaker continued 'The decision of who takes over Healthopathy may already be up to me Keep your eyes open next week at the Convention You ll see that I've made as many friends recently as you ve been making enemies Your disgusting conduct hasn t gone unnoticed McClintock among the Boys you re getting known for a sot

Ease me out Spartan said just try it and see what happens

Bootmaker laughed shortly I have no intentions of easing you out If and when the time comes I ll kick you out so hard you won t regain consciousness for a week Now was there anything else you wanted to discuss?

"I m in earnest, Spartan said matching his tone to Bootmaker s Fire those people

Hoary rose and smiling at Spartan said almost amiably Don t be ridiculous You ve deteriorated so much recently that you ve lost your powers of reason There s nothing you can do to me McClintock I have the loyalty of every witness on my side Moreover anything you tried to do would involve yourself If you re not too drunk to understand think that one over I ll be going now And hereafter—if you want to speak privately with me—I ll be in my office at the San I m taking over from now on I don t go to you you come to me I m running Healthopathy Incorporated and for the nonce you can stay around and be our drunken figurehead if you like "

Bootmaker left without haste, no show of anger to mar the confi dent ease of his journey to the door He went out without a backward glance or a further word

Spartan fixed himself another drink and then set it down untasted He had to keep his wits about him to puzzle this out. Somehow through some unfathomed process of reasoning Bootmaker had turned the girl s death into an advantage Precarious as Bootmaker might admit his position to be, he had inadvertently finally managed to implicate Spartan in his activities Since Spartan had in fact, com pounded the crime (and this time it differed from Allie s case Spar tan reminded himself foggily for he was a stranger to the matter then) there would be no way for him to injure Hoary and still get himself off scotfree

Joni had said that Bootmaker was hopelessly insane Spartan con sidered her diagnosis seriously now There was no other explanation for his jeopardizing both the San and the Center and both his safety and Spartan s through permitting Cramer s activities No reason actually for him to have turned the San into an abortion mill Boot maker went beyond the amoral into the bizarre As long as he was making as much money as it was possible for him to make by whatever means he went about humming snatches of opera as complacently assured of the justifiability of his actions as Mrs Sixe distributing presents to underprivileged children at Christmas time

Bootmaker Spartan realized belatedly was a psychopathic per sonality what laws of conduct he followed only he himself had codified and only he himself could interpret.

And Cramer Wasn t he another?

How about McClintock? He took up the drink he had just deter mined to forego and downed it without stopping for breath

Then he had to admit that he was going to do nothing about Cramer and the others at the San Tony he reminded himself drunk enly, could have been wrong anyway

It was time for him to lecture and he made his uneven way to the rear of the building For the next hour because he was drunk and irascible he talked at random jumping so rapidly from the chem-istry of muscle action to optical physics to chemistry of the blood that note-taking was impossible Looking at the downy faces of his bright young quacks merging and separating before him, he veered

abruptly from blood chemistry to a jargon of Healthopathic terms such as imbalance imbalansate kinetic reversals and plunged into Schrodinger s wave mechanics Unable to separate fact from theory and lucid theory from sheer multisyllabic nonsense the class gaped up at him dazed a trifle frightened, but totally lost in admiration

When class was over he felt an imperative need to talk to Mark It was as if talking to his protegé listening to Mark s time honored griping about the treatment bestowed on freshman medical students could somehow render impotent that classroom of scientific incompetents he had just departed from

Wendy answered the phone Oh hi there Doc! How are you?"

I m fine kid You still taking your Kinetabs like a good girl?"

He could tell from Wendy s polite voice that she knew he was drunk. Sure thing And I haven t been sick once this week!

Well you'll be past that stage soon anyway Wendy is Mark there?

Yet when he heard Mark s voice he wondered how he was to explain his call. 'How s everything?" he asked with muddle minded jocularity

My God sir Mark said sincerely are people supposed to live through this? I just got in and I ve been at school since seven A M "

Willing to say uncle yet?

Mark laughed Not quite There was a pause "Is there anything I can do for you Doc?

"No no I just— I was just wondering if you d heard anything from Miss Cameron recently Be careful, he warned himself no use getting Mark in an uproar about his crank aunt just before his final exams

Well she s still down in San Diego Doc I guess she s getting along all right

Oh I imagine so Usually when they re really ill they come to their senses and get some competent help She was probably just off on some damn fool diet there for a while that—— He went on idiotically Mark politely listening at the other end of the line while his thoughts separated into That growth she had wasn t a new development damn fool woman might have been too far along even when she walked out on me

be all right " he finished too heartily and then added on a

drunken inspiration 'The reason I called—I'm going down there for our convention next week and I thought I d look her up You'll have to give me the address

Gratefully Mark gave him the information

But when he staggered from his office later the piece of paper on which Viola Cameron s San Diego address was written had already gotten shoved under a pile of M H case histories He forgot about her completely concentrating all his energies on driving himself home without mishap Ought to hire myself a chauffeur he told him self And then the novel thought struck him Ought to quit this damned drinking

And as Quent Quarles put it at dinner on Sunday night at the air port Well Joni, I guess we might as well take Spart out and pour him on his plane

Joni said wretchedly Quent I ought to be going with him So what if the hinterland Healthopathists find out he s sleeping——" She put her hand tightly over Spartan s Darling get a grip on your self! In the name of dear martyred Professor Plotkin try to stay rela tively sober down there You re the Grand Old Man you can t go falling on your pratt in front of all your disciples!

All right Spartan mumbled All right all right "

VII

On the ferry ride over to the hotel that was located on a strip of land fingering down parallel to the mainland he promised himself one—just one—nightcap

Then crossing the veranda and entering the lobby he heard only a warning shriek before Phoebe Kidd undeniably beautiful as is a lioness in her charge lunged at him crying Here he is here's Doctor McClintock Dear Doctor come this way every body s waiting for you and led him bleary-eyed and weary into a room jammed with people

A band struck up the tune of O Tannenbaum" and Pops Chaparral led the noisy gathering in a rendition of the Healthopathy Hymn

Healthopathy Healthopathy
You've meant a richer life for me

They crowded around him ex students former assistants all ages all sexes (the Hollywood contingent was represented by all five sexes to be exact) and blabbed the jurdane lyrics in his face Grinning foolishly he felt his head explode into pain his temples throbbing

There were so few of them he remembered by name Yet standing there smiling suffering he had to accept that he alone was responsible for this bellowing reprehensible unspeakable mob of over two hundred Blabbermouths

Apart from the crowd as befitted the scornful Power Behind the Throne Horace Bootmaker stood enjoying Spartan s predicament And beside him smiling with unconcealed contempt stood his daughter Isolde Ferrar

For an instant he felt a pity for her that was greater than that he felt for himself Poor Boots Hoary was so afraid to let her out of his sight, so alert for the slightest opportunity for rebellion that he was dragging her to things like this now

'Speech!" Some bumptious young oaf was slobbering in his ear and the singers broke off to echo the request. SPEECH!

He swayed and Phoebe s hand was on his arm a sturdy support, while she fended off his attackers with fierce shrieks 'Now not tonight everybody! Dear Doctor McClintock s tired Please Doctor Higbee could you tell Pops Chaparral to start the singing again? Doctor Bootmaker oh Doctor Bootmaker "

He found himself escaping with Phoebe s aid and being deposited on the elevator As he rose slowly in the air the melody of O Tannenbaum carried through the grillwork Even on the second floor he heard faintly

throughout the wo-rr—ld HEALTHOPATHY!

It was going to be a task beyond his powers beyond any vain glorious assumption of self-control he ever had to stay sober through this

He awoke to the sound of the surf and rose shivering in the foggy morning As was his habit now he walked gingerly for the first few steps tabulating the while the sensations in the pit of his stomach his temples and his solar plexus from which seemed to radiate that nauseating lassitude that always accompanied his hang-overs This morning his head ached dully—a shot of brandy would fix that up his stomach burned vaguely—hot coffee for that and his legs were

heavy—a shot of brandy in a second cup of coffee would perk him up considerably There was no feeling at all in his solar plexus he was as free of fluttering as if he were delightfully hollow there like a Dali painting of a man with sky showing through his middle

Then he remembered what he would face this morning Already the large dining room with its crown chandeliers would be raucous with the gibberings of Healthopathists and the clatter of cutlery and dishes Like a parrot loudly preening herself in the jungle Phoebe s squawk would pierce all other sounds And Bootmaker would be there his mustache crawling above his lips as he chewed And Higbee breathing sonorously at him his breath foul

He sighed and ordered his breakfast sent up When it arrived, he laced his coffee generously with brandy and drank it slowly watching the while as the fog swirled over the cold uninviting ocean There was something he had promised to do—it nagged at him He could not remember unless it was that he wanted to bring home a present to Joni

The convention schedule was on the table next to the tray and he wore a warped smile as he reread it

Monday

11 00 A M *Duodenal Ulcers A Psychosomatic Kinetic Imbalance*
Arvin Miller H D
Horace Bootmaker D E.M H D
Ralph Higbee, D.E.M , H D

Lunch

3 30 P M *Is Cancer an Imbalance or Physical Injury?*
Mitchell Rolls M D H D
Louis Edmonds H D
William Paulson D C Ph C , H D
Mary Andrich D O H D

Tuesday

All-day session Proposals for Healthopathic Bill
(It is requested that all Healthopathists attend)
Introduction of delegates to California legislature

5 00 P M Cocktails and dancing

8 30 P M Buses leave for Tijuana.

Wednesday

Business Meeting American Healthopathy Association
P M Election of officers
Prof Phoebe Kidd sec t y

9 00 P.M Banquet.

Rumor had it that at the banquet a tribute would be read by one Ives Stanhope there would be solos by Pops Chaparral and a Token of Appreciation presented to Dr McClintock by Miss Health opathy

There was no mention of a Mi.s Isolde Ferrar the concert pianist and harpsichordist Except for last night, he had not seen Isolde in months Over his second cup of coffee he thought about her Then he was shamefully happy he had not brought Joni along

In the sub-level of the hotel the commercial display booths were set up in aisles throughout an enormous room There were displays of health foods juicers shredders macerators exercisers massagers cold creams vegetarian products papaya home-permanent waves cactus pills yogurts vitamins chlorophyll chewing gum laxatives baby foods antacids bathroom scales diathermy machines colon therapy apparatus collapsible steam baths hospital beds urinals a five-foot shelf library on bloodless surgery an *Encyclopedia of Drugless Healing* diagnostic machines vibrating machines Kinetico-diagnostic apparatus douche bags ultrasonic contraptions electrical treatment machines treatment tables autoclaves rectal dilators and Kinetabs

At the Kinetabs booth a handsome curly haired man in a white coat was charming the wives of the Healthopathists And undoubt edly Spartan thought sourly freely diagnosing and prescribing for all who cared for Charlie s idiotic opinions

Dr McClintock had been spied and was now backed against a white picket fence enclosing a fever cabinet display while one dull wife after another was presented to him Through the din he shouted "How do you do Mrs uh yes I isn t it? How do you do oh " He stumbled over the vari ous names knowing that these women could not really be named Mrs Speculum or Mrs Truss and yet being unable to make any thing else from the garbled syllables shouted at him A hen Healtho-pathist, who only a year and a half ago had caused him much

agitation until he convinced her that he did not make it a practice to have intercourse with his students in empty labs was bearing down on him He struggled frantically to escape found himself pressed intimately against the bosom of another wife and succumbed to his fate Horn rims atilt on her face and jaw jutting the hen Healthopathist pounced Doctor I didn t get to talk to you in the crush last night There s something very important I must discuss with you Couldn t we get out of this crush and I *beg* your par don ma am Doctor! Doctor would it be possible ex cuse me but you are stepping on my foot! Lady *will* you get off my

He looked wildly about for Phoebe saw briefly in the mass of people a glimpse of Hoary listening alertly to an ultrasonic machine salesman and deciding that there was safety in numbers resumed his incoherent observance of the amenities How do you do Mrs uh Testic—— Oh Lord her name was certainly not that was it?

Everyone had cocktails at lunch so the fact that the Grand Old Man had four went comparatively unnoticed

He began the dreary round of talks and discussions and button holing parties in the suites occasionally seeing Isolde remote and unhappy By the third afternoon the business session loomed a threat to his sanity as well as his endurance Yet he stoutly decided to attend Sufficiently fortified for the ordeal he swayed out of the dining room intent on a nap before the session began

Isolde was looking at him from a far corner of the lobby In the midst of all the milling Healthopathists he saw her, and went at once to her side He thought of his nap he thought of a drink he thought of trying once more to sequester Isolde somewhere By the time he was within speaking distance he had dismissed the nap

'Must you always bear down on people that way? Isolde said Can t you just walk up to them?

'Let s get out of this madhouse Go somewhere we can talk he said instantly

She smiled but her mood was nevertheless sullen 'Buy me a drink and I will

Briefly he debated which objective was nearest his heart a drink or being alone with Boots (The prostate when one is approaching

fifty recognizes that there might be alternatives in pleasure) Another drink he concluded and then Boots in that order "I'll buy you the whole damn bar—let s go

"It s either a question of getting drunk with you or necking with Pops Chaparral" Isolde explained.

"A difficult choice How did you ever decide?"

The bar with its dark wood and ships lanterns was relatively free of seagoing Healthopathists and those who were on board playing hookey from the business meeting discreetly attended to their drinking upon seeing the Grand Old Man enter and possessively herd Dr Bootmaker s lovely daughter to a corner table

He ordered Gibsons for them. He watched glass in hand and hand arrested in motion, while she drained her glass not gulping not tossing her head merely emptying it efficiently into the hollow of her spirit. "Damn" Isolde said softly "oh damn, damn, damn "

Cautiously he said, 'Here take mine and I'll go order us some more"

She nodded without raising her head and then took out her cigarettes As she bent her soft tailored shirt fell away from her neck, revealing the clavicles standing out in ridges with deep hollows above and below 'Thanks I will Spart—you'll stay here with me talk to me even if I get viperish, won t you?"

"You ve always had to beat me off before and I've never known you to be anything but viperish. Drink up I'll get us some more"

Once or twice after that he looked at his watch noted that the business meeting was in session and thought it of no more importance than the fog that was rolling in thickly from the ocean just outside the windows Carefully he drew Isolde out accepting as he always had any and all of her insults cheerfully Then as the fog closed in and the room became more intimate she looked up at him miserably and he knew he had her confidence

Spart," she asked suddenly 'What s Mental Healthopathy?"

Nothing he said regretting that this was a fact "People just tell me their woes and I listen. He moved cautiously "Sometimes it actually helps though. Want to give it a try?"

I have just an woe I want to be a pianist"

He was so genuinely surprised that he raised his brows and blurted "Want to be? I thought you were going great guns I thought you were preparing for another concert that——"

Isolde gave him a direct near hysteria look. Another And another Longer programs bigger halls more bombast. And less and less attention.

"But your records——

Don t sell. She smiled unbecomingly Do you know why I was offered the contract for those records?

'I assume——

Oh stop it! Dad arranged it. He paid for it all including the money they gave me Brilliant, talented Isolde Ferrar dashing off for a long-delayed divorce and starting a glittering new career at the same time He *paid* for those records, Spart understand? I could have played the Happy Farmer' on every side and they'd have yelled just as long and loudly over me in New York"

I bought an album and I play it constantly, he said, admitting this for the first time to anyone—even Joni

'Sucker"

"But your concerts, he persisted

Now you're being absurd You know about renting halls don t you? You pay money Then you have a decent piano put on the stage and you pay the moving men money Then you have it tuned and you pay that man money Then you have five hundred tickets printed up and you give the printer money And the programs Then you give all the tickets away because who the hell would buy one? And then on the big night, all your father s friends come and listen politely and wish they were somewhere else And the critics come late and very shortly thereafter are somewhere else You play and play and the next day you read your notices All that work, all the hours of hard physical labor to prepare your program and then you read the papers Again the ugly smile And you have one consolation—it s obvious your father didn t get around to paying the critics

McClintock I m in a rotten mood I m leaving——"

Stay down he said promptly and finish that drink You ve another waiting for you And tell me something Boots—do you think I m a total ass?

The grin that used to come into his mind constantly when he thought he was concentrating on something else returned to her mouth faintly Not totally, she said judiciously

"Thank you And now, for the first—and last I hope—time, I'm

going to be fatherly with you Tomorrow I'll make up for it by chasing you around the room to the tune of O Tannenbaum but for now Isolde Bootmaker Ferrar you are such a little jerk You have so much honest talent that it s a wonder the Blabbermouths haven t lynched you for it long ago—— *I m* talking if you don t mind! I may have a tin ear but I can tell vaguely when I hear something genuine And that was you Once

"Once she said flatly

Before he went on deliberately cruelly, "you went into your present emotional menopause

She recoiled "You filthy——"

Aren t I, though? But I m telling you in plain language what the critics have been saying about you for years They just dressed it up They say you lack feeling or nuance or whatever other damn fool synonym comes into their heads at the time Yes my little phobiated phantasm — *What's that?* his soggy mind said sharply *what was that about her reality?*— "I ve read your reviews too And for my money the critics are one hundred per cent right. You re cold Boots you play like a eunuch dusting off the keys What do you think music is? An equation in calculus? Look—maybe music doesn t pleasure me——"

"Hillbilly" she scoffed temporizing trying to avert his accusations

"*Never mind that now—it comes out when I m tight Where was I?* Oh the way you live is showing up in your playing You seem to be charmed with the idea that you re composed of some sort of invisible humor from the neck down with only your arms sticking out. And having convinced yourself of this all you do is smoke eat sleep play the piano and smoke some more You never go anywhere——"

"I can always start sleeping with the Flip boy she said Maybe that would help Or with you Doctor McClintock Maybe I need a course of very personal treatments Only I don t think your girl *friend would appreciate your professional——*

He interjected calmly 'Naturally I expected you to react like this"

'Naturally' Isolde echoed "And now it s time for you to say something like 'We won t bring Miss Jolyon into this "

'Thank you for saying it for me Thinking of Joni in this moment made him as uncomfortable as an errant husband. 'The topic under discussion is you

You ve always liked to fancy that I m jealous of that Joni haven t you? Isolde said viperously Just because she used to act like a bitch in-heat whenever she was around Tony

That is absolutely a neurotic delusion of yours' You re getting pretty foul mouthed these days aren t you Isolde my dear?

Oh excuse me' I forgot, you were jealous of Tony—that was it She fumbled for the cigarettes and he saw that her hands were trembling Maybe we d better leave both of them out!

This is exactly what I deserve he thought I knew she was on the verge of a tantrum and yet I had to start something like this She knows damn well I have nothing against Tony now, even if I could cheerfully have murdered him once And she knows why, too

Lower your voice" he said warningly

She complied at once but made up in intensity what she lacked in volume Or maybe you think that s what s wrong with me I should be like Joni I should talk in a loud blare and buttonhole men and set up headquarters in bed——"

If Joni had your musical talent Spartan said she d certainly play the piano a damnsight better than you do There s nothing dried up about that girl s loins—or her courage She wouldn t kid herself —she d know that papa couldn t do it for her And she d know it was a hell of a lot more than getting up on a stage somewhere and playing a bunch of notes!

That female couldn t be taught to play the *C* scale Isolde said furiously

Maybe not But if she attempted it she d do it with fervor or not at all

I m not interested in discussing her musical approach Isolde was endeavoring to be withering

'Nor I He longed to slap some sense into that white angry face More quietly he said We re not really talking about Tony and Joni and you know it. We re talking about what s wrong with your life and you re afraid to agree with me Now simmer down and drink up

She looked down at the cigarette she had crumbled in her hand

and let it drop to the table Please forgive me McClintock. I'm being absolutely appalling Maybe I d better run along

He reached over to take her trembling hand but she hastily withdrew He persisted encircling her wrist with thumb and index finger Be honest with me you might not particularly like me but you trust me Isn t that the way it goes Boots?

"Something like that I guess" She toyed with her drink obviously afraid to drink more to go beyond certain bounds Then she moved her arm and he released her

The Healthopathists across the room were complaining loudly their Midwestern voices rising incongruously in the nautical decor 'Why it s warmer in K.C than it is here Why we went on a picnic last weekend and it was atchully *hot!* Why the dogwood was out and believe me that means

'How about some fresh air? he asked Isolde

'I suppose so Isolde said unhappily You know I really had intended to get roaring drunk She appraised his condition frankly Does it help?"

Immeasurably shall we go?

As they passed the Healthopathists table—he did not recognize them they were correspondence graduates—he leaned over them and said seriously But at least the nights are always cool And that s something!"

They yapped back happily Well now you ve certainly got something there Doctor McClintock. Doctor McClintock, may I present you to Mrs Ovary And my wife Mrs Pessary"

He mumbled politely and looked at Isolde from the corner of his eye Apparently he had misunderstood again her face showed no amazement at the names "Miss Ferrar he said to them at large and then seizing Isolde retreated hastily

It was almost dark on the terrace and because Isolde was shivering he put his arm about her They walked back and forth unsteadily He said quietly "Boots you know you re ruining your life don t you?

"I guess so People do—they do it deliberately You were ambitious McClintock why did you?

Because he said impersonally "when I was your age when I was at my very peak—I was in prison"

She was unsurprised merely contemplative 'That's what I thought there s more than one kind of prison though

He stopped trying to see her through the fog and dusk. Isolde you ve got to get away from him I don t know how far it s gone I don t want to know But——"

She began to tremble "Are you talking about my fath——"

Of course I am Apparently he hasn t been overt—but he's seen to it that no other man will ever be either Hoary s done a good job, Boots a very good job Look at you—you re shaking! You ve been thinking it for a long time and you know it s true You can t kid yourself any longer Isolde you ve got to get away from him!"

She shook her head and her hair brushed his mouth "It s too late now Maybe if I d gone off with you instead of Tony But I can t leave him now—his mind is sick I can t go away and leave him for people like you to finish off

"I d go with you Then you d know I wasn t doing anything to hurt him Boots go alone if you want—I'll help you I'll even look after him for you! My God can anyone offer you more than that?" A memory rose in his mind—a threat he had once made to Boot maker *You ever do that again and so help me I ll tell your pure little daughter what you're up to* I suppose you think he s always been so kind and generous to you Isolde s music lessons, Isolde s expensive education Isolde s clothes, and her car and her Steinways and her harpsichord You damn fool, don t you know how he used to pay for all that?"

"Yes she said in a tired voice I know now I even know he was the one who killed that young girl That poor little thing they found up in the *hills* my God I can't leave him now!

He found that she was clinging to him biting the knuckles of the hand that clutched his lapel He buried his face in her hair, and they rocked for he was so unsteady on his feet

I ought to kill him for you he said

I thought of that too She pulled away from him and he could tell by the sound of her voice that she was crying 'I d better go now —the business meeting must be over In the dark she kissed him on the mouth You mustn t drink so much McClintock" she said.

She was gone

He stood in total darkness and his mind echoed dimly, "I'd better go now—the business meeting must be over'

In an hour or so the banquet would start He had to shower shave and dress And he had to get drunk all over again

He repaired at once to the bottle in the top dresser drawer He drank, not from the glass in the bathroom—that was a civilized gesture indicating some mental reservation in the mind of the drinker—but straight from the bottle He lay on the bed, holding the fifth by its neck and thought about Isolde Bootmaker Ferrar

He thought about how nobility went begging while criminality and bestiality inspired—commanded—devotion. Old relationships and new old affections and recent enthusiasms mingled in his mind. His own tenacious devotion to Buddy Boswell and Imagene Milt s never flagging championship of himself the ennobling affection of a black convict, Lincoln And Lee for a drunken Andy Fuqua and Joni and himself ever patient, ever yearning for a skinny frustrated acrid Isolde And Isolde

It was ridiculous even her name was ridiculous

There was another emotional servitude that haunted yet evaded him He drank again searching among the rubbish of his mind for it. Someone or himself had wanted something very badly and it was ridiculous too

He found himself under the shower the water pelting down on his scarred back, and the bottle still in his hand He stood for perhaps a half hour shoulders bowed like some unsheltered animal enduring a cold rain He stepped out leaving the water running, and swaying before the fogged mirror ran his electric shaver over his cheeks Concentrating on the bloated face bobbing before him it came to him that failure was one imbalance that Kinetabs could not right. Not Kinetabs nor alcohol, nor sex, nor even money

A disinterested voice in his mind said You are disgusting He *heard it very clearly* even over the roar of the shower

VIII

At exactly eight fifty five a resplendent Dr Spartan McClintock locked the door of his room and started the trip down the hall to the elevator He walked with a rigidity reminiscent of the military but without the snap and vitality of the parading colonel. His step was rather a careful searching of each foot for a purchase on a

strangely undulating surface then finding it striking it smartly and combined with the straight back and high flung head it was a gait somewhat similar to that of the victim of locomotor ataxia However odd it served nevertheless to bring Dr McClintock to the portals of the banquet room where just under three hundred people were assembled awaiting his arrival

He saw first the blur of the uncovered shoulders of the Healthopathists wives and then phalanx after phalanx of heads nodding above black bow ties The collective voice of Blabbermouthry rose in such a welcoming roar that it seemed strange that the roses decorating the tables were not blown helter-skelter in the hurricane

Dr Spartan McClintock swayed dangerously located after an instant his misplaced center of gravity and walked into the room He was met by a feverish pair Ives Stanhope and Professor Phoebe Kidd both of whom were applauding as if the eminent Founder of Healthopathy were a comedian taking a final bow

truly truly great moment the professor babbled Her white hand was possessing Dr McClintock s elbow and as she gave him a slight shove to set him into motion again he caught a drift of exquisite perfume from the sleek gun metal braids wrapped about her classic skull On his left he detected almost as musky a perfume rising from the person of the exuberant Ives Stanhope

A mound of roses sufficient to cover a grave were arranged before the empty seat into which Professor Kidd found it necessary to cram Dr McClintock Once down on his buttocks however he righted himself enough to maintain his torso in a reasonable approximation of the vertical

Dr McClintock s smile was peculiar Those seated closest to the speakers table grew a trifle restive like a herd of animals scenting danger when they identified the twist on the Grand Old Man s mouth as being a sneer But at that moment the waiters advanced on the seated ones with food and reassured the assembled Healthopathists and their mates settled down peacefully enough to feed

Dr McClintock stared unceasingly at the roses for one minute and then sneezed The minute orgasm seemed to sober him somewhat and his bloodshot eyes swam into focus The sneer relaxed into an even more disturbing expression that he was to wear during the rest of the evening a withdrawn contempt combined with a bowelless cruelty

It was inevitable that the food would clarify him and as he picked at his turkey Spartan looked about at each member of the speakers table in turn There were Dr Higbee breathing earnestly to Mrs Higbee Charlie the pharmacist, with his rotund wife Miss Health opathy and Ives Stanhope Dr and Mrs Arvin Miller (he was the new treasurer of the American Healthopathic Association) Dr and Senora Luiz Parados of San Salvador Dr and Mrs Reginald Sta pleton from the Virgin Islands (both were coffee-colored this caus ing no little consternation among the southern Healthopathists including the two from Kennassee) the Reverend Willis Oates and Professor Phoebe Kidd another hen Healthopathist the winsome Dr Andrich now the victim of the moist slobberings of her dinner partner Pops Chaparral and of course the impressive Dr Horace V Bootmaker and his charming daughter Miss Isolde Ferrar the concert pianist

Just before the ice-cream shaped in the form of a rose was con sumed (the rose it was explained had been adopted as the flower of the Association to symbolize rosy good health) the champagne toasts began

Dr Bootmaker President of the American Healthopathic Asso ciation was toasted He rose smiling and said Thank you thank you thank I cannot express the humble gratitude with which I accept the post as first president of our great organiza tion And even accepting it as I do only as a poor substitute for Doctor McClintock who was unable to undertake the demanding duties of the office along with his many other duties "

Isolde s eyes met Spartan s wavered, and fell away She was pale under the bright lights and possibly because of the electric blue of her gown her paleness did not become her She looked tired miserably tired and her fine thin shoulders seemed scrawny rather than delicate Under the slick of oily euphuisms Hoary was spread ing over the assemblage she sat dull and listless Only the character istic strain of the muscles about the mouth indicated that she had come to some decision and was stubbornly going to abide by it

Befogged in his mind as the night outside Spartan had one in stant of lucidity Somehow because of his long association with Hoary he was responsible for what had happened to her He could not remember exactly when it was that Hoary had ceased protect ing and hiding her away from his business associates and instead

had thrust her among them as his hostess But now she sat like Hoary s young bride while he preened his accomplishments before her Healthopathy had driven Hoary over the edge his cynicism had been no match for too much money too much power too much success too much adulation too much immunity

and I can truly say that this is the proudest moment of my life! Hoary concluded

Oh God Spartan thought watching Isolde he means it!

Phoebe Kidd toasted the convention at large announcing shrilly that each delegate would receive a scroll suitable for framing proclaiming that he or she had been present at the First Healthopathic Convention

In order everything and everybody was toasted but the waiters the ice cream and the ubiquitous roses Dr McClintock's head pounded and he found he was drunk deathly drunk, not so much on liquor and champagne as disgust.

The applause the posturings the pronunciamentos the spurious humility and the noise the barnyard cantata of the Healthopathists all yammering together each determined to outshout and be heard over his neighbor slowly began to induce in Spartan a mental nausea so pervading that it approached mysticism Above every black bow tie he saw an extension of his own mouth blathering of imbalansates and kinetic units and factualized theories and physic excreta and componential regulation analyzation determination and rectification

On the tides of disgust in his mind floated the wreckage of his self respect his love for Isolde his affection for Joni his fellowship with Milt and his transparent identification with young Mark Cameron He gulped glass after glass of wine until looking down the table he saw a hydra headed Isolde staring back at him openly pitying him

In the midst of the din there suddenly occurred a silence like that ominous suspension of activity at the center of a cyclone and all faces were turned on him A simpering Miss Healthopathy was at his side holding a large metal shield in her hands decorated with a silver rose-entwined golden *H* Ives Stanhope was fiddling with a mike on his other side

book coming out all about Communism in Hollywood!" someone whispered in an awed voice

Then Ives bawled Ladies and—— frowned at the mike and

adjusted his voice "Ladies and gentlemen Healthopathists all. I say Healthopathists all for some are Healthopathists in education and others like myself are Healthopathists in intellectual appreciation Healthopathists all—it is my privilege to honor one among us who has proved himself not the scientist of the year not the scientist of the decade but the scientist of the century! A man who has pushed back the barriers of ignorance who has rushed with headlong courage over the barricades of suspicion and contumely who has persevered in the face of allied and scurrilous attacks by all the destructive forces that the ranks of organized medical monopolies could advance A man who——

"A scientist who——

"A leader who——

"A pioneer who——

Beads of cold sweat appeared on Dr McClintock s forehead His pallor cast off greenish reflections from the crystal chandeliers above As Pops Chaparral twanged his guitar and the Healthopathists broke into *Healthopathy Healthopathy you've meant a richer life for me* Dr Bootmaker placed his hand under Dr McClintock s arm and assisted him to his feet. Miss Healthopathy preened, thrust out her breasts and handed the shield to Dr McClintock. He looked down at it for an unusually long time smiling.

Isolde Ferrar and Phoebe Kidd found themselves exchanging an odd searching look, and then turned their gazes again to Dr McClintock.

Speech!" Ives Stanhope shouted into the mike before thrusting it before the Grand Old Man

Spartan nodded He laid the shield on the table and picked up his glass of wine I want to propose a toast, he said in a slur But first, I shall be happy to say a few words to you In the three days of this Convention I have renewed acquaintances and met many others of you for the first time He paused to still the shaking of the hand holding up the glass of champagne

And I cannot tell you how gratified I was to discover that there are a few genuine a few sincere persons among you To those of you to whom I refer I want to say this Stupidity was forced on you by an unfortunate birth, but I think that by your simple sincerity you have dignified a liability into an asset."

The Age of Ice had descended on the First Healthopathy Con-

vention All present were frozen solid in attitudes of shock disbelief, impotent rage or stunned incomprehension

An asset, Dr McClintock repeated in the same uneven but quiet voice And with you I have no quarrel I ask of you only one thing. It is beyond your reach to effect good in this world and therefore you should make it your goal and life ambition never to do anyone harm In other words do the best you can"

Miss Healthopathy smirked on in radiant good nature

Now as to the rest of you my Healthopathic colleagues I've listened to your discussions I've heard your enthusiastic talk of the new ultrasonic machine that can produce apparently naturally occurring abortions of new methods of curing cancer with vitamin douches of nondirective Healthopathic therapy as a cure for schizophrenia I was impressed Believe me, I *am* impressed "

Dr Bootmaker made a strange jerky motion with his hand half rose and then sank down again

'Take it easy Hoary" Dr McClintock said clearly 'I'll get around to you next. He hoisted the champagne glass into position. For such a group as this one here I can think of no better man to be your President than Hoary V Bootmaker Doctor Plotkin would be laughing in hell right now —Dr McClintock grinned briefly— if there had been a Doctor Plotkin you understand.

For I feel sure that there is only one man present more competent to head you people than myself To Hoary V Bootmaker has rightfully gone that honor For if ever I saw a collection of quacks, mountebanks Blabbermouths frauds charlatans muttonheads incompetents social misfits cranks and outright homicidal maniacs—*this is it!*

And now my toast Dr McClintock held his glass aloft no one emulated the gesture 'To science to the medical profession and to research—a toast May the bilked exploited despoiled ruined defrauded and ill of this nation someday rise in their wrath and enact legislation that will forever protect you and themselves from all forms of quackery and all quacks

even such as I

In utter silence Dr McClintock drained his glass Letting it drop with a tinkle to the feet of Miss Healthopathy he smiled at her sweetly, "Yes you may be excused *We won't need you any more* dear"

He teetered, gripped the table and looked past Dr Bootmaker directly at Dr Bootmaker's daughter Very distinctly he said, "Well, Boots are you coming with me or not?"

The last he saw was her stricken face before he flopped with quite a clatter of dishes across the table Above him roared the voices of Ives and Bootmaker punctuated by Phoebe s shrieking. The import of their trio was that Dr McClintock was very very ill. Isolde watched him as he was lifted from the table and then blood pouring down from a cut in his brow curtained her from sight.

When he regained consciousness, Phoebe and Higbee were seated by his bed. Someone had put adhesive tape on his forehead and it pulled the hairs of his eyebrow when he opened his eyes And some one had turned off the shower in the bathroom

"We called the house physician, Doctor " Higbee breathed. "Since you were obviously suffering from an—uh—injury He seemed to agree that something—well—something had poisoned you and gave you an injection."

"Thanks Higbee " He closed his eyes against the light. "Higbee no offense you understand "

"Of course Doctor " Higbee breathed quickly

"Everybody else gone?"

"We re still here dear " Phoebe said in a subdued scream. "Why don t you just relax now and either Doctor Higbee or myself will stay with you——"

"What time is it?"

"Almost four " Higbee told him.

"Go to bed, both of you," Spartan said. "Let me have my hangover in peace You re good people you two Got any B_1s Phoebe?"

"That's what the injection was " she said, after a slight hesitation. "So you re all just—just fine now We can all drive home in my car after we've rested, tomorrow afternoon." She sighed deeply

Spartan chuckled. "It s been one hell of a convention, hasn t it?" He dropped off to sleep again.

ix

Condolences arrived by the thousands from Healthopathists patients, Kinetabs customers and dealers and friends The word had

spread that Dr McClintock had finally suffered a breakdown from overwork To his door came supplicants for audience, and Joni screened them mercilessly

He had not been beyond the grounds of his house for two weeks now

Milt was in and out shaking his jowls at him "You damn fool you ve been giving your heart one fine kicking around You stupid alcoholic you Healthopathist, you!

Shoemaker s children Spartan said cheerfully

Mark Cameron arrived almost at once looking tired and jittery He did not broach the subject of his aunt until his second visit

"Oh God Spartan said contritely I forgot all about it, kid'

Sergei Packard came valiantly sneaking in a half pint past Joni s peeled eye Before they were caught, Spartan managed to have two grateful swigs Joni ranted at Sergei like a fishwife and then, relenting said fiercely "Damn you Sergei you re just like the rest! Do anything for him wouldn t you? Whether it was good or bad for him or good or bad for you for that matter I think you re all stark staring insane! The only one of the gang who realizes he s been had and had good is Pops Chaparral But the rest, the Healthopathists Ives me you, half of Hollywood, we all came trotting right back. What does he have to do rub your noses in it?

Sergei grinned sheepishly

"Even Reverend Oates! Joni raved in indignation 'Do you know what he had the crust to do? Called a prayer meeting, that s what Everybody come in and bawl hell out of Jesus for letting this happen to our wonderful Doctor McClintock! Are you guys nuts? Honest, is that what s the matter with you?"

Sergei said sharply forgetting to lisp "Be quiet, woman!"

Silently he and Joni locked horns while Spartan enjoyed the spectacle Then Joni recognizing an old-country contempt for her sex, capitulated in frustration All right all right but the whole gang of you are just encouraging him to go on with this nonsense instead of retiring the way he should."

Sergei relapsed into his impediment. I agree he should retire" he said gravely "But will it be all right with you if he keeps his friend ?"

"It means he ll keep his enemies too" Joni said with feminine apocryphal logic.

x

He went back to the Center and there in his office was his well stocked bar awaiting him By ten the first morning he was in a condition that straddled the line between drunkenness and sobriety By eleven he was drunk.

It came to him as a shock that alcoholism was as unrelated to will power as spinal meningitis He had a chronic case of it after a long and insidious onset.

His patients flocked to him the M H ones bright-eyed with curi osity There was talk that Dr McClintock s breakdown had been a kind of mental thing and instead of trusting him less the M H gang warmed to him as one who had been through the Valley of the Shadow also Across his desk all sorts of practices commonly alluded to only by their Latin names were freely admitted and described, as if the Doctor himself had just quitted an orgy of equal inventiveness and ferocity

Several times Spartan looked at his desk blotter and actually winced. Those patients were billed seventy five dollars an hour but they seemed to think the catharsis worth it.

Then Phoebe presented herself in his office shrilling like the noon whistle

xi

It had come to Phoebe in a roundabout way Hoary had not dared to go to Quent with his plans and it had taken him several weeks to line up a lawyer he thought he could trust. The lawyer was now waiting outside Phoebe s captive

'Truly Phoebe declared Doctor Bootmaker is no friend of yours to attempt such a thing! Nor mine may I add. I discussed this with Doctor Higbee before coming to you and he agrees with me in all respects Doctor I m sure that after you hear what that nice Mr Knittle has to say—and I m sure he was misled for he is very *cultured* and wouldn t think——

Phoebe heart of my heart Spartan said patiently may I interrupt? Are you trying to tell me that Hoary went to a lawyer to get me committed, and you ve got the lawyer out there in the reception room?

Phoebe looked meaningfully at the drink on his desk, and said Dear Doctor you must pay attention! This is urgent! Yes Doctor Bootmaker is trying to have you committed as incompetent and himself appointed guardian of your interests At the Convention you see She rubbed a thoughtful finger along the fur of her stole then resumed in the bright cheerful voice used on children when in the dentist chair you were very very imbalanced you know And Doctor Bootmaker had planned to use Doctor Cramer Doctor Higbee and several Mental Healthopathists as witnesses She smiled coyly But Ralph—Doctor Higbee—and I have become rather good friends recently He came right to me as soon as Doctor Bootmaker approached him

Phoebe you are as loyal as you are lovely Spartan said dutifully but sincerely He pondered

He wanted another drink but denied himself this escape True to his promise Hoary was planning to kick him out when the moment presented itself and take over Healthopathy One more scene another fracas like that at the Convention banquet, and Hoary would have his evidence Poor distressed Hoary confiding to a judge his sorrow over his partner s tragic condition A complete deterioration of the personality Your Honor—even made lewd suggestions to my daughter Heard him why Your Honor three hundred people heard him! The alcoholism is of course a symptom rather than the underlying psychosis itself manifestation of aggressiveness and unoccasioned hostility stagnation of kinetic inhibitions embarrassment of psychic components poverty of ideas

He could do it, Spartan thought his hands growing cold I ve made M H so big that even I can t buck it He flipped the button "Miss Gaily will you send in Mr Knittle the attorney? Thank you"

Mr Knittle sent him a bill for a one thousand-dollar retainer fee Spartan paid it without comment He had already taken Phoebe to dinner as well as unto himself and encircled her graceful wrist with a diamond set watch You always know what time it is Phoebe my delight, he murmured

But it was not at an end Hoary was out to get him Spartan acting, on impulse put the details of a dissolution of the Healthopathy enterprises into Quent s hands and then sat up till late at night

brooding In spite of a dissolution Hoary would still be president of the Association

Spartan fumed He should have attended that business meeting instead of making a fool of himself over Isolde again He should have unless Hoary had instructed Isolde to occupy his time that afternoon Nonsense!

He sweated when he thought of it Then he compromised with his longing for her Isolde was vain, semi hysterical unhappy illogi cal frustrated underweight, and overtired, but she wasn t a sneak Considering the description he saw that it was outlandish for him to want her

Nevertheless he did.

XII

May was half gone now and the students of the College were boning for exams Of all the graduates of colleges for drugless prac titioners only the Chiropractors and Healthopathists would be able to practice—the latter in the capacity of Mental Healthopathists But that was still according to the anguished howls and frantic lob bying of the other practitioners something At the next ses sion of the legislature though, the Healthopathists Bill would be presented And presented Spartan was sure successfully

The weather grew hot and dry and sitting in his office the ice melting in a drink at his elbow he felt reminiscence flow through him sluggish as blood Alternately he was vigorous and youthful or tired and aging and the alcohol released suppressed pangs and long-ings that he had thought long since forgotten Once he closed his eyes and saw the cyclone fences at the Gap glittering in the sun after a spring torrent Nostalgia blotted out the patient droning away across the desk and the impatient tooting of the Cads down on the Boulevard He wanted a scalpel in his hands again with the odor of chloroform sweet in his nostrils as violets He awoke with a start he had been dozing Again he was going to pieces but this time he felt pleasantly

The mood of sweetness of an indefinable light happiness per sisted as long as he kept a certain amount of alcohol in his blood

stream at all times He planned a party for the young Camerons the Salpingers, and himself as soon as exams were over He recognized, without caring that this party was in the nature of a belated day dream having to do with himself and Milt over twenty years ago

Only when he thought of Isolde did he squirm uneasily, for beyond her loomed the thought of Hoary He should be more persistent, should be hammering away at her even now Once the assets of Healthopathy were divided it would be a triumph were he to obtain Isolde as a part of his share Then he could sell out and let Healthopathy collapse under Hoary s leadership, a lot Spartan would care

Yet he did care He took a secret and perverse pride in this hoax he had perpetrated so successfully It was an accomplishment of a sort, and though he was disgusted with his handiwork he felt it should be his privilege to destroy it.

Still he boozed tranquilly in his dim office the draperies drawn against the May sun outside, and a patient droning away at him as lulling as a bottle fly

In the evenings he was likely to find himself in some strange bar at two in the morning and no recollection of how he got there Ruffians cadged drinks from him and tired whores for whom he felt a gentle pity received from him a shake of the head and an unexpected windfall of any amount from five to fifty dollars

Joni never knew where he was she spent her evenings looking for him When she did find him she fell upon him with cries of rage and sorrow Oh, darling look at you! You can t go on like this look at your eyes all bloodshot Spartan you re so bloated! And after Milt s *warning* you about your heart——"

There was nothing to do in the face of such a harangue but have another drink.

XIII

And so in the end it was Viola Cameron who dealt the telling blow to Healthopathy Looking back, Spartan was to feel that there was a point of justice in having a sick crank, a woman typical of the Faithful who had caused the rise of Healthopathy also to cause it inadvertently its fall

He could not remember how or why he came to Milt s door that midnight in late May He knew only that he was there leaning on

the doorbell as much for support as to gain admission He was somewhat injured by Milt s irritated greeting feeling that old friends should be welcome at any hour and never cross-examined But Milt was getting a fix on him through his new bifocals and demanding fussily "Well, where have you been all evening? Mark s been here twice looking for you and God knows where he is now and Wendy s been on the phone all night trying to find Mark. What s going on? Now you lissen here Spart, I haven t had a moment s peace since I got home from the office Still complaining Milt led the way to the den He waved Spartan to a chair and then made a phone call

'Hello Wendy is Mark back? Well now baby yes he s just come in—— Oh God. Put your mother on if you can t make sense yourself Nancy? Yes dear Right here beside me No I don t know where either of them are

He slammed down the phone and glared at Spartan "I thought I told you to stop slopping up every drop of likker in town! Frankly I don t see how you keep from killing someone yourself included, when you drive in that condition Stop staggering around, dammit, and I'll brew up some coffee"

Oh relax Spartan said pleasantly "I'll have a snort of your——

"The hell you will" Milt snapped I am so disgusted with you, Fartin that I oh, what s the use? I thought after the spectacle you made of yourself at your own convention you d snap out of it But no you come home and get drunk the minute we turn our backs I'd hate to tell you how many times Joni must have called me in the past two weeks looking for you. What do you do go on the bum every night as soon as five o clock rolls around?

Determined, drunkenly to remain unruffled Spartan said easily "That s a fair description of it, I guess He grinned winningly "What the hell Milt, I have problems Dull boring annoying problems"

"You also have a strained heart I believe I informed you of that fact not so long ago since you were too stupid to discover it for yourself."

"Oh, stop being the Family Physician for a minute will you?' Spartan said humorously I should think by now the charm of medicine might have worn off just the least little bit."

"Why should it have?" Milt said confronting him Squat and un tidy in his old dressing gown Milt s anger still had dignity It s never worn off for you Or maybe it ha. what hasn t worn off is the charm of feeling sorry for yourself For all the years you ve been involved in this Healthopathy nonsense that s been your excuse for every crummy thing you ve done I had my brilliant career taken away from me Hell, the only career you ever wanted in your whole life was making money! And that was because it was the next best thing you could think of to being that bastard Buddy Boswell!

Pierced to the heart, Spartan stared at him "That s not true, he murmured sorrowfully and then began a noisy sodden, drunken weeping.

Oh my God" Milt said appalled Oh my you re damn well going to drink that coffee now Bawling you! Sniveling like that! Oh my God look at you Muttering to himself un happily he left Spartan and waddled to the kitchen

When Milt returned with a tray containing cups and the coffee Spartan resumed mawkishly ' in trouble then you really know who your friends are But you are the last person I would have said would turn on me"

He hiccuped and sobbed loudly The room revolved pa t him, and he began a lazy head-over heels falling through space That Milt should turn on him Milt, his good ole pal

"SHUT UP!" Milt shouted I m almost ready to agree with that quack partner of yours You ought to be committed for your own good!"

You don t know Milt, ole pal Spartan snuffled You don t know the awful things Milt you d drink, too you d get fall ing-down drunk every you don t dream of seventeen year-olds lying in the hills somewhere with their mouths full of black rain water You don t have *that* on your——"

"What? Milt said and added before Spartan could repeat him self Go on and drink that now while it s still nice and hot."

"Black rainwater" Spartan repeated A last tear meandered down his cheek and plopped into his coffee He drank scalding his throat and became slightly revivified in spite of himself The room stopped whirling with a jerk that hurt his head. Embarrassed almost to the point of more tears he held out his cup for a refill I—I guess I made an awful——"

"You sure did Milt said brusquely Do you remember whether or not you ve had anything to eat tonight?

Spartan could not remember He noted clinically that his stomach seemed empty and did not too violently object to the notion that something solid might be placed in it Then making his decision with the suddenness of the drunk he decided to sober up Show good ole Milt he could do it he thought, following Milt to the kitchen

Accustomed to being unsteady having adjusted to the state of being *only half conscious of what he was doing most of the time he* was able to take the frying pan from Milt s inept hands and cook the eggs himself Where s Nancy—maybe she d like an egg too?"

Milt looked at him reprovingly I told you six times Nancy is over with Wendy And Ted s gone to look for Mark who s looking for you I ve called Nancy and told her you re here——"

Able to comprehend now that something was awry Spartan said curiously "What does Mark want me for?

Milt shrugged and said exasperatedly All I know is that he had to find you I wouldn t do I absolutely wouldn t do"

Spartan turned his face away from Milt and busied himself adjusting the flame under the eggs Is that what he said? That you *wouldn t do he had to find me?*

'That s what he said Milt brought his hand down on the chrome dinette table And with that he ran out of here with steam coming out of his ears Then Wendy calls and starts bawling and Nancy gets hot flashes and Ted——

When these are done just turn off the fire will you?" Spartan said I want to make a phone call

Weaving a bit, but approaching for him a relative state of sobriety he made his way to the den He called the San 'This is Doctor McClintock Would you please look in the files for a Miss Viola Cameron and see if there s a San Diego address for her? Yes I ll wait

After several minutes the nurse said Hello Doctor McClintock? There was a San Diego address but it s been scratched out It seems she went to her old Los Angeles address after her release

Release?

Why yes Doctor Miss Cameron was out here for a week. She left this afternoon

"Whose patient was she?

She was Doctor Knox s patient, Doctor McClintock"

"I see The uneasiness was now a miniature tumult Give me that address and phone number The records did not have the phone number the nurse reported back, but he took down the ad dress He called both his house and Joni to say where he was Then he went back to the kitchen and said warily Well I think I know what all the fuss is about. Mark s aunt blew in town She s probably ill or something and wants Mark to bring me to her He sat down to his eggs stolidly and began eating He had a third and a fourth cup of coffee

He was waiting In the meantime he could help matters by sober ing up completely He would need his wits about him to calm Mark down and send him reassured back to Wendy and his studies "In fact" Spartan said coolly "she might have cancer of the ascending colon"

Milt gaped. Who?"

"Mark s aunt. They told me at the San that she s been out there all week and left today So maybe when Mark blows in again I can go out to her house and talk some sense into her this time

"I don t know what this is all about," Milt said aggrievedly

"I'm telling you Spartan said "Mark sent his aunt to me last year I didn t like the looks of her X rays and tried to send her to you" Treading the ground of Milt s pride cautiously he continued "I gave her chapter and verse on what would happen to her if she did have cancer

"And?"

Spartan examined the tines of his fork minutely "And she got in a huff and walked out. The next I heard she was in San Diego seek ing the merciful ministrations of some quack down there I let it go"

Milt rubbed his forehead, reminding Spartan that his own head ached dully "Well I guess the thing to do is get the woman into a hospital——"

"Which will take some doing" Spartan interrupted grimly

" and see what s what. Milt gave him an odd direct look. "Don t you realize that as long as there are people like you around people like that poor sick fool will—— Oh never mind. You do the best you can you always do in that direction"

Spartan s conscience hurt him more severely than his headache He had promised Mark faithfully to look up Miss Cameron while in San Diego And faithfully always doing the best he could he had become and stayed drunk the entire three days forgetting Miss Cam eron Mark and even Joni and remembering only that he wanted desperately to besport himself in bed with Isolde Bootmaker Ferrar It came to him that only once the first time he had asked Joni to marry him had he been able to forget his tenacious ambition to have Isolde Everything seemed to have revolved about Isolde— his refusal to retire his stubborn retention of a man he loathed as his partner maybe even his drunkenness Only his sponsorship of Mark was a thing apart from her

"Let s go back in the den" Milt said. Be more comfortable there"

They were sleepily discussing a case of Milt s when Milt dozed off Then sometime after one the front door slammed and Milt awoke with a start. "Mark? Is that you——"

Mark Cameron shiny-eyed as in delirium trembling incontrollably stopped in the doorway and said directly to Spartan I looked everywhere for you From six on I looked in every bar Joni said you ever got drunk in——"

Just a minute!" Milt said "You simmer down and tell us——

Still looking at Spartan with his glistening stare Mark sa.d "My aunt died at twelve thirteen"

"Good God——" Milt began as Spartan pushed himself up and started to approach Mark Premonition halted his feet in mid-stride and drew the blood from his fingertips "Who was there?"

"I was" Mark said

I mean what—what doctor was——

I was alone with her She kept moaning even after the morphine made her unconscious I kept giving it to her until she died"

"Oh God Milt said again, softly Abruptly he began to shout. "Morphine! What do you mean you gave her morphine! Who gave you—— His large face was oily with the sweat of rage and he struggled to push his bulk from his chair

"I stole it from Spart" Mark said, his teeth showing too much as he talked as if his mouth were in a spasm "I knew where he kept his drug room key and I went and got it. I didn t know how much

to give her to stop that awful Putting his head to the door frame Mark began to cry with terrible sobs that sounded like retching

All right Spartan said all right kid He tried to pry Mark s fingers from the frame, but Mark clung as though nailed there In the face of that terrible sobbing Milt quieted Tell me what happened Spartan said hearing his calm voice and thinking. Oh God my peaceful middle age I m too tired too tired Come on Mark I ve got to know what happened

Between gasps Mark said 'They kicked her out of the San this afternoon Knox didn t want her on his hands They took her in an ambulance and left her in the Vermont Street house They just left her! No one with her She finally crawled to the phone to call me——

She crawled? Milt repeated softly

Mark began to cry Spartan slapped him smartly

Come on kid I ve got to know the rest!

She was paralyzed I guess it had spread to her spine When I got there she d made it back to the bed she was still conscious And she stank it was the worst '

All right Spartan heard himself saying over and over

She wouldn t listen to me If she d have been unconscious I could have done something But she kept insisting you could help her she kept saying she wanted Doctor McClintock The great great Doctor——

"All right Spartan said

I m going to kill that Knox! Mark screamed When you see your buddy you tell him for me——

All right " Spartan said Do you want me to slap you again?

You d just left the office I just missed you "

But I could have—— Milt began

"I decided Spart would have to kill her for me Mark said hysterically It was the only thing anyone could do for her—just kill her!

Spartan nodded at Milt, who heaved his bulk from the chair and went past Mark out the door Anyone see you at the Center?

The watchman let me in

When was this?"

About nine-thirty Ten I don t know"

"How about the neighbors at the house?"

"I told you she was alone She was alone all those hours trying to crawl across the floor she was alone she was——"

Milt came back with his bag Together he and Spartan loosened Mark from the doorframe and pushed him down on a sofa The retching sobs continued unabated

Needle poised Milt said to Spartan Anything else?"

"I guess not."

They stood looking down at Mark,

"I'll call Nancy" Milt said straightening up and letting the empty syringe drop to the table "And then I guess I'll go over and sign the death certificate and call an undertaker You stay here——

'Don t be a damn fool Spartan said "You can t possibly risk it God knows how much morphine he pumped into her"

"Who s going to know?

'That s right, who s going to know? So I'll go over and sign the certificate and you stay here"

I can t let you do it, Milt said stubbornly If anything went wrong, you couldn t possibly explain away the morphine You re supposed to be a drugless practitioner What would happen if it was discovered one of your patients——"

"What would happen to Wendy and Ted and Nancy if it was dis covered that one of your patients died with enough morphine in her to kill a horse?

"Maybe he didn t give her much"

"We don t *know* Milt "

"Didn t you learn your lesson the last time Jesus?" Milt said slowly "Didn t thirteen years in that prison camp teach you a thing?

Yes Spartan said promptly I learned to be a damn good G P surgeon and floor scrubber Don t go dramatic on me Milt—I can get away with this one easy In fact I have to be the one to go I have to be able to say I sent Mark for the morphine if worse comes to worst. I'm sure I can trust my watchman, but it s the only danger ous part about all this

'I can t" Milt said "I can t—— Spart, look at the life you have ahead of you! You can live in utter luxury for the rest of your days I can t let you risk all that!

Luxury " Spartan said negligently Oh hell Milt, what s money? It s not everything you know ' He said quietly to Milt s flabby weary face Give me a drink before I go will you Milt '

Viola Cameron s house was one of those little cottages found hud dling in the back yards of so many southern California homes Isolated in a garden and protected from the street, it had a cozy charm it was the kind of little house young brides-elect eagerly scan the want ads for It would shortly be for rent

He stood for a moment on the porch breathing in the scents of the garden under a soft night and then tried the door As he had expected the house was unlocked

The odor almost made him gag

He fumbled for the wall switch found it, and looked about him In her lifetime Viola Cameron had been fanatically neat and clean a foible strangely common among those who do not believe in the hazards of harboring malign bacteria On the furniture were slip-covers faded by too frequent washings the floor showing under the cotton rug gleamed, every doily and antimacassar was snowy and on a table in the center of the room was a lamp designed to purify the air as well as give light In an overflowing bookcase was a collec tion of works on every conceivable branch of medical charlatanism most of which contained in their titles either the word "Health" or Nature" or some variation thereof In the center shelf he recognized the tattered dust jacket of *Medical Magician* It was indeed a suit able library for a woman who permitted herself to become so tor tured with cancer that it was necessary for someone to kill her

Beyond the living room was a narrow hall at the end of which Spartan discovered a bedroom The bed contained a figure with the sheets drawn over the face The odor here was almost overpowering. Beside the bed was a small table on which lay a hypodermic and a number of ampules Only two of the ampules were untapped He raised the sheet looked at the emaciated face of Viola Cameron, and went through the meaningless motions of listening at her still chest.

He fingered the hypodermic and ampules thoughtfully, noting the massive amount of morphine Mark had injected into the dying woman Then drawing up a chair to the table he uncapped his pen and set about to fill out the death certificate Milt had given him.

The front door must have been opened and closed very cau tiously for he was unaware that he was no longer alone until foot steps approached the bedroom He found it strange only that he was not more surprised to see Bootmaker standing in the doorway smil-*ing at him genially Hoary s pale bright eyes flicked over the death* certificate disinterestedly and rested on the hypodermic His nostrils dilated. "Not very pleasant in here is it?

Spartan held his pen above the line *Cause of Death*

"Is it your habit to kick them out of the San in the condition this woman was in?"

Lifting the sheet, Bootmaker delicately touched the cooling skin then recovered the face He shrugged She was Knox s—he wanted her off his hands He hadn t the guts to help her

"It seems you didn t either Hoary"

I had Cramer give her a shot before she left this afternoon. It was the best I could do

This was the second time that evening he had heard this said Once by Milt, and now by Milt s antithesis *You do the best you can*

You called the San tonight Bootmaker said as conversationally as if they were listening to Puccini in his library Any call you make to the San is reported to me at once I called you at your house and Joni s apartment Then I called the Center The night watchman in formed me that only young Cameron had been in—he thought it rather interesting that Cameron went first into your office and then into the drug room So did I He poked among the ampules with one immaculately manicured finger "It appears that someone gave Miss Cameron enough morphine to incapacitate a horse

She died of cancer *Spartan said,* thinking wearily *Why do I* bother? I am tired bone tired of sparring with Hoary with a corpse between us

Of course Bootmaker said politely His smile lay easily under the trimmed mustache I should think you d be interested in how much I want.

Spartan bent over the certificate again Two months ago you left *the body of a young girl in a ravine I was the one who pronounced* her dead No I m not interested in how much you want

"I want everything The San the Center and the Kinetabs Lab

You have enough saved to live for the rest of your life in complete luxury

Again Bootmaker was echoing Milt What kind of man am I Spartan wondered that my dearest friend and my worst enemy see me in the same light? Aloud he was saying calmly knowing that it was merely putting the matter off for a few moments at best, I don t see how Healthopathy Incorporated will do you much good when you go on trial for murdering that girl"

You re about—— Bootmaker lifted the sheet and looked once more at Viola Cameron " about two hours too late with that one McClintock It s Mark Cameron we re talking about now I doubt if your Jew-doctor friend will be pleased to see his son in law go to the pen

I sent Mark after the morphine and I administered it.'

Bootmaker nodded pleasantly It s immaterial to me which of you two is ultimately found guilty Mark Cameron would be ruined in any event. And he added humorously 'You re having a terrible time getting yourself through medical school—even vicariously—aren t you? No Spart, under the circumstances it would be better if you made it convenient for me to take your word for this matter There s no need to haggle is there? I ve said what I want very plainly and simply I ll call Quent in the morning and then the three of us can get together and work this thing out legally—— Breaking off Bootmaker looked about him with fastidious distaste Frankly I don t see how you can stand the stench in here

All the things he could say I m used to it Hoary, I ve been around you too long The stink of needless death is mingled with my clothes and the food I eat and the liquor I get drunk on It s the smell of doing the best you can as a feeble act of repentance after having done the worst. It s the way Allie must have smelled in her grave Do you know I never knew never even asked where and under what name she was buried? Do you know what we should do? We should erect a stone over that grave of a young girl lying dead with her open mouth full of black rain and we should have carved on it Here Lies the Founder of Healthopathy For as Phoebe would say Allie was truly truly the beginning and it was inevitable that it would end in a room like this with another corpse on a bed.

That could hardly be considered doing the best you can could it? We can make it even simpler than that We could just say that the

best an incompetent or a quack or a criminal can do isn t enough Only doing the best that can be done is enough In medicine there is no neutral gray area between competence and incompetence just as there is no semiexistence between life and death Doing the best you can always results in the one and only the best that can be done will ever save or even appreciably prolong the other

He said only using the same flat tone he had used to an hysterical Mark earlier All right Hoary If you want it this way

'You ve made it necessary yourself McClintock Bootmaker reminded him He left without a farewell.

And again as Phoebe would say How true! How truly truly

As Bootmaker s solid footsteps departed Spartan found himself writing on the certificate in the space after *Cause of Death* MORPHINE POISONING

It remained only for him to call Isolde He would have to use Viola Cameron s phone for he wanted Isolde out of the Bel Air house before Hoary arrived there at all costs Any excuse—perhaps that Bootmaker was in trouble—would bring her to his place in the hills

It was a twenty minute drive from the Vermont Street house to his through the nearly deserted streets He had a quick drink and then called Milt He said tersely "Milt it s O K Sure I ll see you soon

And then he called Joni at the apartment His throat was dry he did not know what to say to her as she cried in a half awake voice Darling are you just drunk or are you in trouble somewhere?

I m neither he said finally I just wanted to talk to you Joni you ve been pretty patient I don t think I'll be getting drunk any more

"I wish I could believe that She sounded lonely and forlorn and he wondered briefly why he didn t go to her and let Isolde come to find the house dark and only panic waiting to receive her

You can believe it this time Joni

When am I going to see you?

'Tomorrow he said promptly

"Is that a promise?

Absolutely He smiled at the phone "Only it'll probably be later in the day Good night, Joni darling"

She yawned and mumbled, and he caught a few sounds like those a kitten makes when it awakes, yawns, licks its chops and rolls over to sleep again love you'

The phone went dead I love you, Joni, he said in all honesty, and slowly put the phone down.

There was no need to call anyone else For a man who was as celebrated as he was in a town full of celebrities, he had strangely few calls to make before leaving for good Milt and Joni and lastly, Isolde Those three only in the last hours he would still be free

He stood at his window wall overlooking the pool and beyond the edge of the cliff the city He had never been able to pick out the Center again after that night when the floods were pointing to it down blue white avenues of sky A tall building between him and the Center even hid the golden *H* that was aglow every night atop the roof

Isolde came a scarf about her hair and only a sweater across her shoulders He recognized the tailored shirt as the one she had worn at the convention it was unbecomingly revealing because she was too thin now

She looked about the room for Hoary and started for the bar before he caught her hand and held her back Sparl, where s——"

Now take it easy Boots He s not dead he s not in a hospital, he hasn t been in an accident and he s still sound in wind and limb" The hand in his was still cold but her eyes had gradually lost their wild straining In fact he s probably home right now, thinking you re in your room sound asleep

The strength of her arms and hands never failed to find him off guard. She was almost out of his grasp before he remembered He held her against him roughly noting again with a part of him the delight which her tall fragile length always aroused in him So expensive she was so impossible for the average man to obtain.

The last time I begged you he said quietly "This time I'm making you an offer I didn t sit up nights rubbing my hands and planning this—it just came up tonight. But since it s here I m taking advantage of it"

You drunken——" Isolde began

'Shut up and listen—you don t have much time Tonight your

father threatened to have me arrested for murder unless I signed everything over to him lock stock and barrel Now I m blackmail ing you Boots I ll be the one to have him arrested for murder—and believe me I can make it stick—unless you come with me He can have the whole damn shooting match and his freedom too I get you Or don t you think that s a fair division?"

Isolde wet her lips and her breath was warm on his cheek. "That girl? The one they found in the hills?"

"That one"

"She died of a heart attack

"Under pretty incriminating circumstances Isolde" Like her fa ther earlier he brushed aside her temporizing I won t quibble or haggle You come with me or your father goes on trial It s that easy for you to decide"

"I don t love you she said, jarred out of her powers of logic

Spartan laughed outright in her face "I don t give a damn whether you do or not. In fact, the less you babble about love in bed, the better I'll like it. You'll have that much less to take your mind off of what you re doing.

Very deliberately she shrugged Hoary's gesture "You re making a poor bargain I'm frigid, I'm inclined to be hysterical and I m com pletely selfish"

"Granted But it just so happens you suit me fine Is it a deal Isolde?"

She stirred and looked at him closely "You re sober aren t you? And perfectly serious Ever since I ve known you you ve been wait ing for something like this to come along. The chance to get my father in a position where I d have to buy him out"

"I had him in that position even before the convention" he re-minded her

She was studying him her breath drifting back and forth across his cheek Her grin came out to mock him 'Now you re desperate Is that it, McClintock?

"No now you re desperate" he corrected her "It was Hoary who called the turn and you didn t expect that.

Isolde s arms came up around his neck and she stretched herself against him in that motionless writhing of a vine clinging to a tree But her mouth under his was still armored with its grin. "I don t sup-

pose she breathed I could lie down on the floor and convince you from there—to give me another choice? Stay here with him and——

No dice he said impatiently and then the excitement was upon him He unwrapped her and carried her into a dark room There in silence the only sound his quickened breathing he explored her fragility with all the rapt ineptitude of the novice chiropractor It was only when his hands and mouth could no longer bear the full burden of the excitement and when whispering to her in a passion of anticipation Isolde Isolde I'll do anything for you, whatever you want I love you too much—— he searched for her thighs and felt instead a monumental crashing within himself and fell making strange convulsive sounds across her breast

Her voice came out of the darkness coolly curious Are you crying Spartan?

Crying? He managed to control his bitter derision and raising himself said to the faint pool of light that was her face This is the funniest the funniest thing that will ever happen to either of us After all these years—after all the insisting and begging and just sitting around and thinking about it when I finally get to you —I m stone-cold impotent!

I m sorry Isolde said finally

Sorry! Why?

Accustomed to the dark he could dimly perceive her lying there lovely and thoughtful Because I think I like you McClintock I want to leave now may I?

He kissed her deeply I ll give you three hours from now to be ready Then I m coming for you and we ll drive to Mexico You can tell Hoary whatever you like or nothing at all Will you be ready?

He memorized her mouth and eyes ran his hands through her hair and touched the shoulders that had always drawn him so And at last she said I ll be ready

He closed the car door behind her and leaned in to tuck the scarf more snuggly about her neck. Lock the doors he said and don t stop until you get home It s late for you to be driving around alone

I'll be all right Isolde said

He kissed her for the last time Isolde I m doing this partly for your sake Because I love you with all my heart.

I know

He waited only for her to disappear beyond the curve of the hill before he got into the Cad and headed down into the city himself

XIV

The policeman behind the desk was singularly unimpressed that he had a confessed murderer before him Nodding complacently he finally interrupted Spartan s barrage of information with a bored "Now let this Doctor Bootmaker go for the moment——"

"That s what I m trying to get through your thick skull!" Spartan shouted. He'll go all right. If you don t get out to Bel Air in a damn big hurry you won t find anybody left but the servants "

"Well, I was thinking maybe we ought to take a look at this Cameron woman first

"And where do you think she s going? She'll wait for us Now look here officer I know what I m talking about. I was present when that kid died I examined her Bootmaker had just performed an abortion on her—oh, for God s sake I can tell you the whole thing on the way out!"

Obviously humoring a madman the officer finally capitulated Flanked by a policeman on either side Spartan found himself in a prowl car moving swiftly along Sunset He could relax now it was out of his hands The law tongue wadded skeptically in its cheek, had finally ambled into authority Hoary would be detained by the time Spartan arrived to confront him

It was dawn when they drew up before the knot of people in front of the Bel Air house a dawn of pure blue light that sucked all the beauty out of Isolde s drawn face and lay in pools of shadow on Hoary s The old Lincoln in all its dowager dignity was before the side door and Isolde was still behind the wheel In the opened trunk there were several pieces of luggage with bits of clothing sticking out here and there and incongruously a pair of tennis rackets

I never knew Isolde played tennis Spartan thought. It seemed to him no more foolish that he should wonder at Isolde s taste in sport than that she and Hoary should have thought to take their rackets with them when they fled the country

"Is this the Doctor Bootmaker you re talking about? an officer said.

He looked directly into Hoary s face Hoary stared back, asking no quarter the man was opaque it was like trying to read the thoughts of a figure in stone

Of course it is, Spartan said He turned to get back into the police car hesitated and went over to Isolde She did not turn her head to him

He said nothing and left her It was not the time to tell her You re loyal all right Boots and you ve got guts You passed with flying colors If you had been waiting alone for me I think I d have slugged you Now get on with your life or your piano or whatever it is you want to do and let me grow old in peace We d have made a pair you and I that s one thing I can sit around in my spare moments and gum for comfort

To his embarrassment he dozed on the way back to town But he was almost light-headed from fatigue His thoughts were wisps stealing across the floor of his mind like smoke All that property to be disposed of the Center some kind of settlement on Mark and Wendy Joni of course perhaps the Kinetabs Lab could keep going—they were good vitamin products—the profits going into a trust fund or an endowment for the University of Tenneville Medical School.

He jerked awake and thought I tried to kill off Healthopathy in private but it went off in hiding and licked its wounds Now I'll have to do the job in public

There was going to be one hell of a hullabaloo

2

In a slack season, when the district attorney s office was yawning rudely in the faces of aspiring young criminals and the press sought in vain for the scabrous or the violent, a certain Dr Spartan McClintock suddenly chose to speak.

Abruptly aroused and titillated, the whole state settled down happily to listen Dr McClintock spoke loudly and at length in press conferences in conferences with a number of deputy district attorneys and in court He was bent on destruction this Dr McClintock, and he had directly in his sights several prominent gentlemen of the medical world Naming names dates and places he was specifically concerned with accusing the Doctors Horace V Bootmaker and Wilson Preebles of abortion murder Evan Cramer with innumerable violations of the narcotics laws and Healthopathy in general of criminal malpractice

He was quite successful The Doctors Bootmaker and Preebles all indignant innocence found themselves convicted of second-degree murder and sentenced to serve terms of from five years to life Dr Evan Cramer found himself a warmly welcomed guest of the Federal Government. And Doctor Knox K Knox, newly escaped from the clutches of the law was immediately seized as a hostage in the savage civil war being waged among the Faithful

These were treacherous days indeed for unwary quacks as reputation after reputation fell under the assaults of the Faithful and careers were left in rubble

Still not satisfied Dr McClintock talked on

ii

Then gradually the commotion died. Only Spartan himself guilty of murd r in the first degree by his own plea had yet to be sen

tenced Now that he was no longer in demand as a prosecuting witness he was given time to set his affairs in order His money could be disposed of easily there was to be a research fund for the University of Tenneville Medical School with Phoebe and old Gus Meunch and Tony Ferrar as trustees

And there was Joni Quent had assured Spartan that the trust set up for Joni was absolutely safe—she would have an income for the rest of her life Yet he brooded about Joni

Then one day he noticed that more and more frequently Joni and Tony were coming to see him together In the midst of his pain, he saw with relief what a fine couple they were going to make

iii

It was exactly one day after the last indignant editorial had appeared that two of the local papers carried full page advertisements inviting the tuberculous the cancerous, the dying to undergo a course of colonics on a dandy new time payment plan and be cured

Letting the papers drop to the floor Spartan closed his eyes and sat for long minutes silent unmoving

That afternoon he was taken to court for sentencing The judge stared at Spartan with frank curiosity while Quent launched himself into a heart rending plea for mercy considering the extenuating circumstances surrounding Spartan s crime

Throughout Quent s oration the deputy D A nodded vigorously in complete accord with the tender sentiments being expressed. When Quent finally ceased the judge asked Spartan Is there any thing you would like to say before sentence is pronounced Doctor?

Spartan said politely I m not entitled to be called doctor and I have nothing to say, Your Honor Thank you

His Honor seemed loath to pronounce sentence and have this interesting specimen removed from his perusal He continued to stare

Suddenly Spartan began to sweat He was seized with a horrible fear that he would somehow be turned loose be given the opportunity to go outside on the streets without money without honor without self respect without the will power not to start cheating and exploiting and destroying all over again

He was through he was tired he was heartsick. He desperately wanted a drink

In relief he heard the judge pronouncing a life sentence It would have been a cruelty to send him out into the world again.

Even so long ago as the day he left Massacre Gap the prognosis had been negative

IV

There was a train excursion taken by many southern Californians to the northern part of the state The pity was that the trip was made at night so that the only scenery afforded the passengers was a dis mal coach filled with convicts they sat nursing their grief or defi ance as intently as their guards nursed their boredom Taking the night train was the term most often applied by future travelers to this overnight jaunt. For some for many even it would ultimately be a round trip for others not

Spartan McClintock was one of the latter He was on his way to San Quentin For luggage he was taking a few friendships the mem ory of a few tears and a few fragments of hope carefully tucked in among layers of despair Quent and the deputy D A had both spoken confidently of the Terminal Island Medical Facility A pris oner with Spartan s training could surely be used there Even Milt, trying to focus his watering eyes through his bifocals had said on his final visit I m not worried about you Fartin If I know you you'll be performing major surgery on the warden s wife in a year Good luck Je—uh——"

Don t you dare call me that again Spartan snapped

Maybe it doesn t quite fit, Milt said contritely Fartin will do better good luck guy

But he had no real designs on the warden s wife medical or other wise Although he thought, standing on the train platform among his fellow prisoners I would make one hell of a good scrub nurse

Then sounds he had not heard for years surged through him and in an anguished homesickness for he knew not what he listened to the pound of iron wheels The melancholy odors and sights of depar ture invaded and scattered his thoughts like wreckage

The huddle of men of which he was a member was ordered for-

ward. He waited patiently in the cool night for his turn to embark The sound of shuffling accompanied his slow progress forward

Then, foot on step it came to him a stunning personal revelation, how long it had been since he had gone anywhere on a train.